キャラバンキッド

Johji Manabe

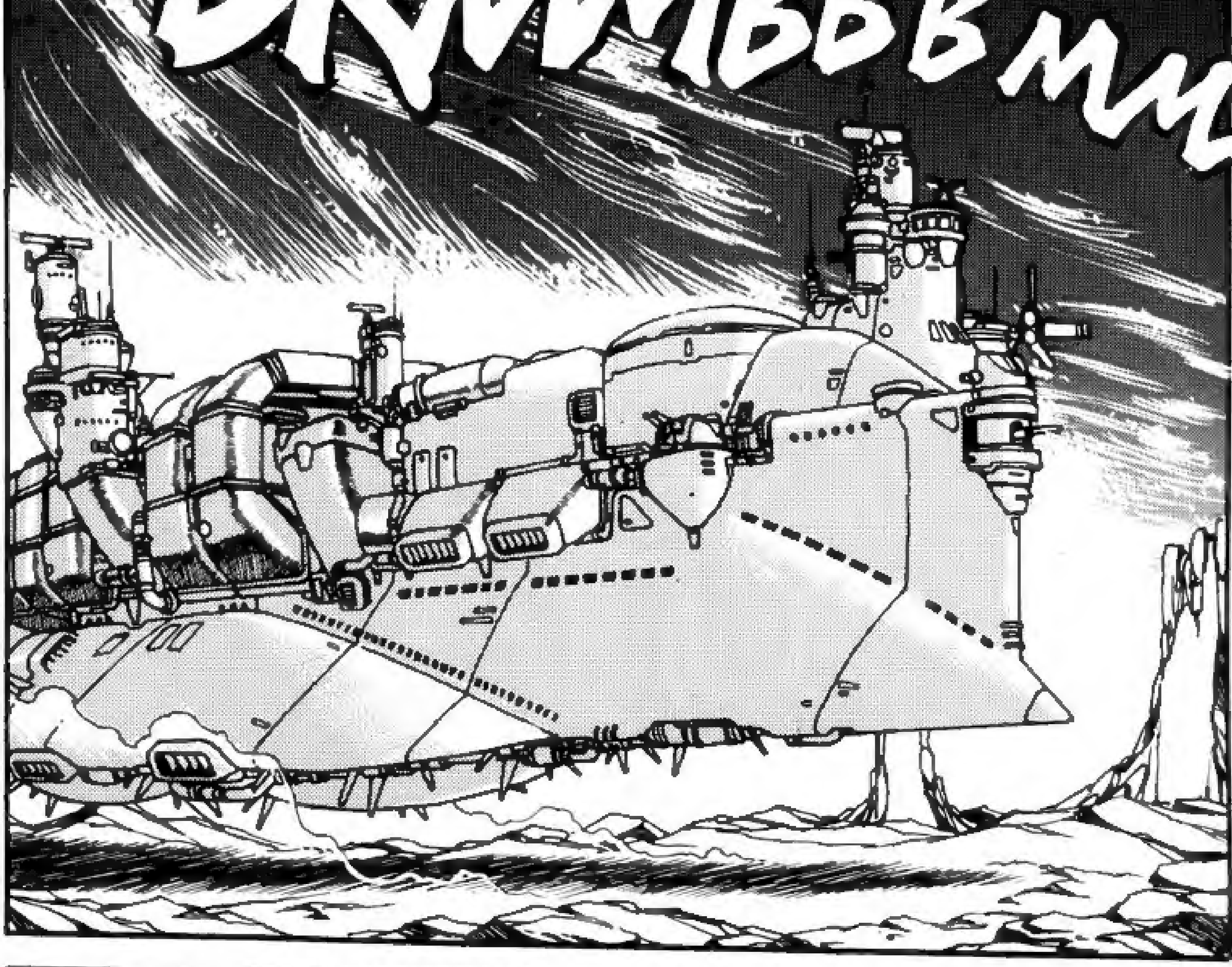
4

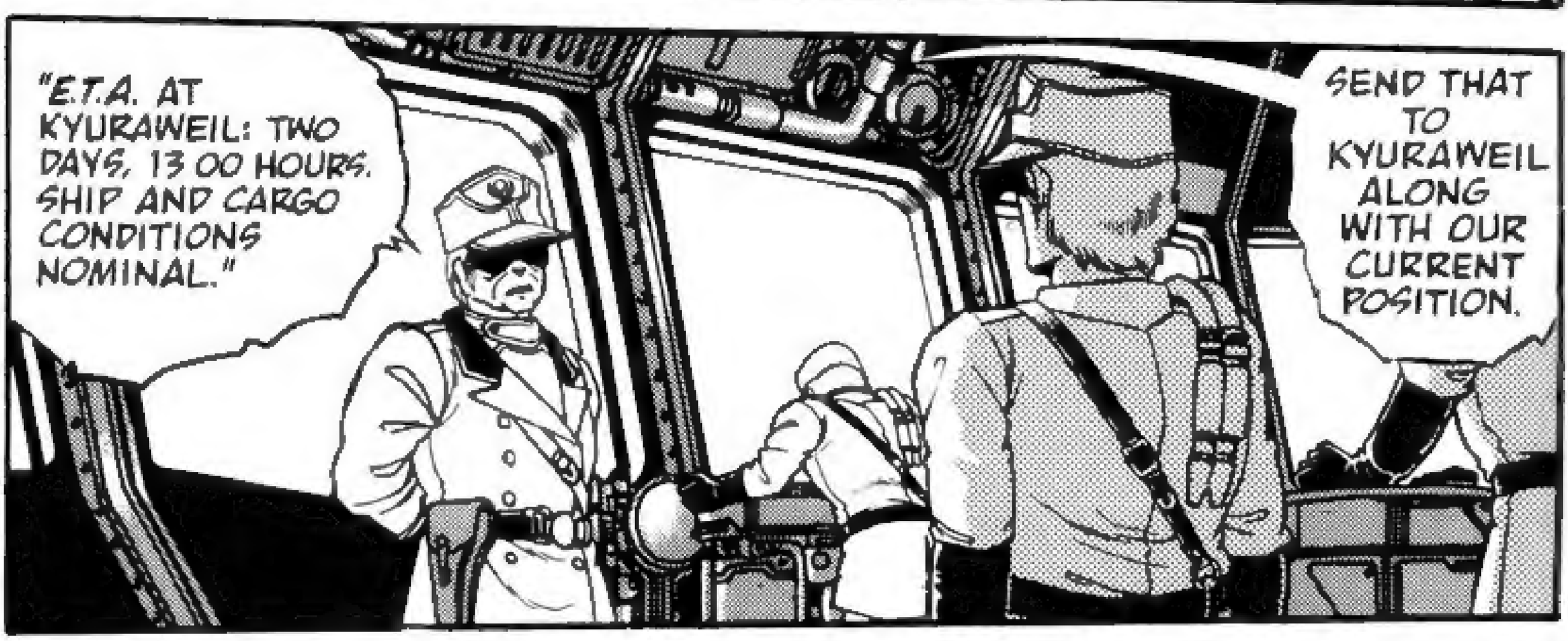
comics

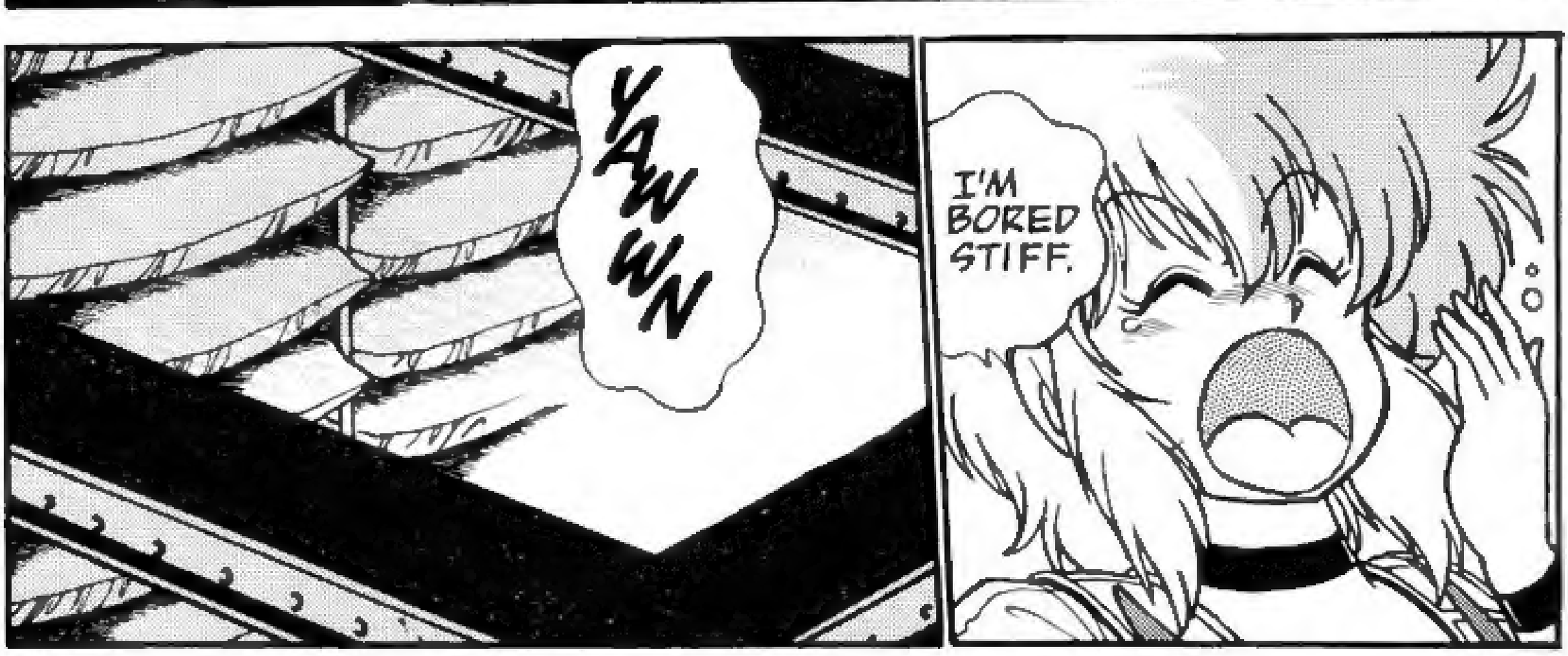
Shonen Sunday Comics

STUDIO PROTEUS

STEEL STORM - PRELUDE



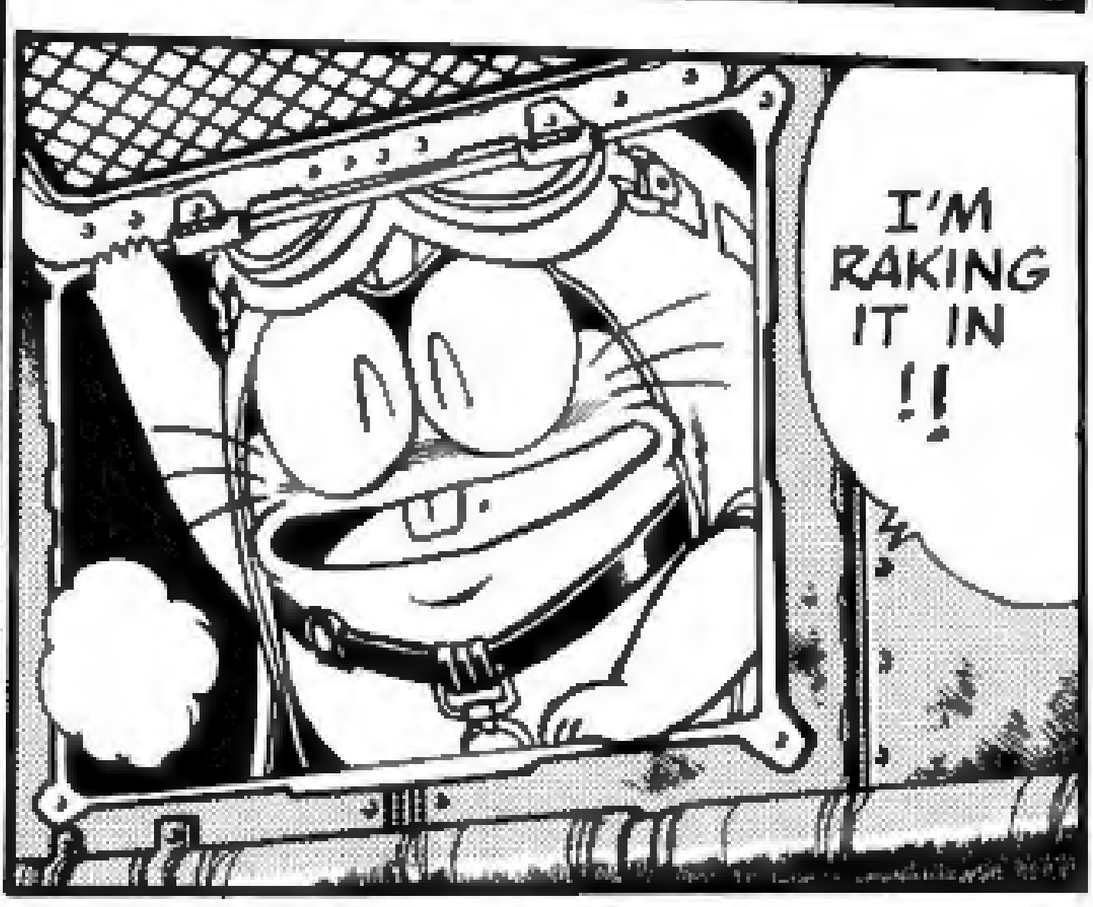

"E.T.A. AT KYURAWEIL: TWO DAYS, 13 00 HOURS. SHIP AND CARGO CONDITIONS NOMINAL."
SEND THAT TO KYURAWEIL ALONG WITH OUR CURRENT POSITION.

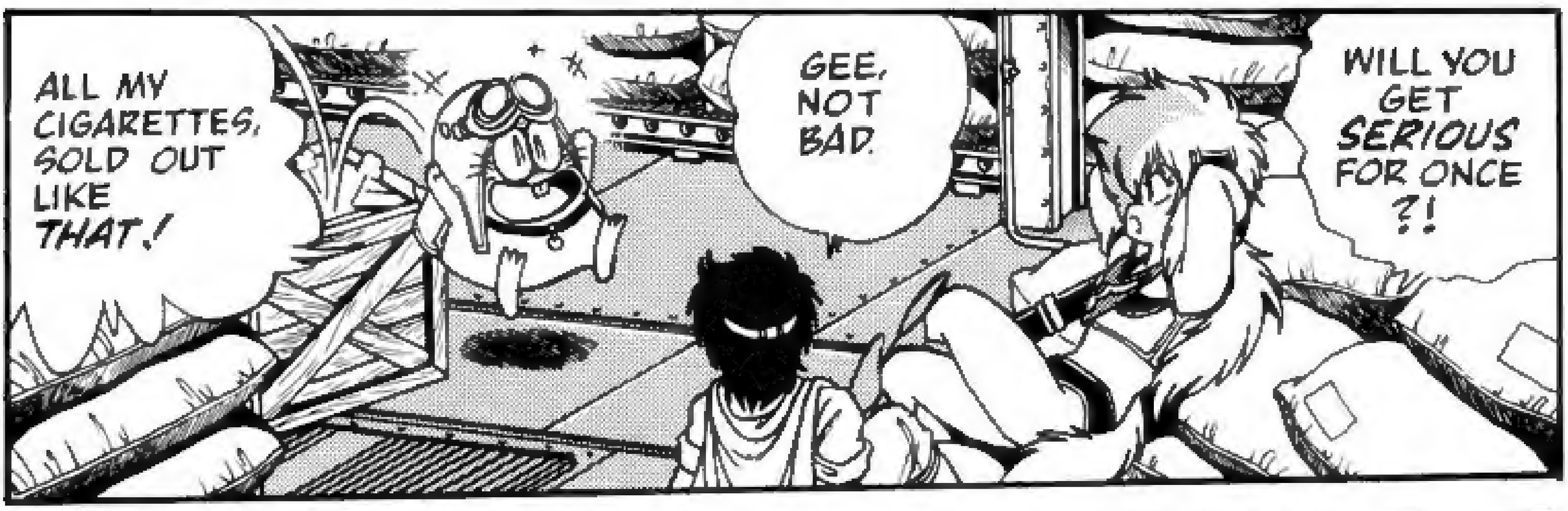

YAWWN
I'M BORED STIFF.

I FIGURED WE'D BE IN KYURAWEIL BY MORNING.

WE WERE DAMN LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO STOW AWAY ON THIS RUSTBUCKET, SO I WOULDN'T COMPLAIN.

TAP TAP





OH, SHIT!
ALARMS!
NOW SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE?! IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU WENT GOOFING AROUND UP THERE!
RULE ONE: "NO PROFIT WITHOUT RISK."
I GOT THIS BAD FEELING...

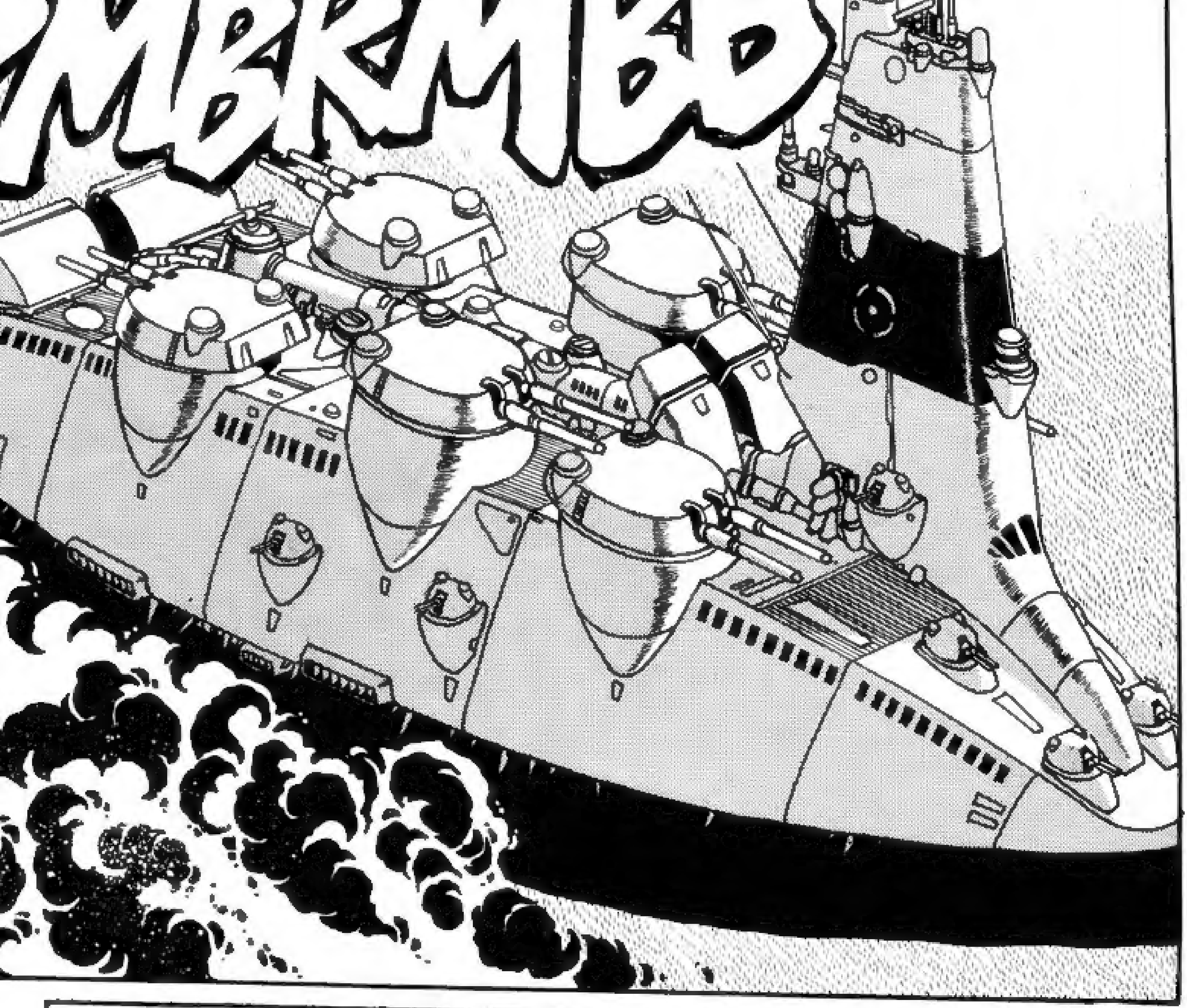
THREE HITS ON THE STARBOARD SIDE! OUR BOILERS ARE DOWN, SIR!!
WARSHIP CLOSING AT FLANK SPEED-- SEND A MAYDAY!!

CONFOUND IT, WATARU... WAKE UP OR YOU'LL BURN TO DEATH!
MOAN...
HMM... DEATH BY INCINERATION. COVERED UNDER WATARU'S POLICY 901...I COLLECT--

WE'LL ESCAPE THROUGH THE BREACH! HURRY!!
HEY, WAIT FOR ME!

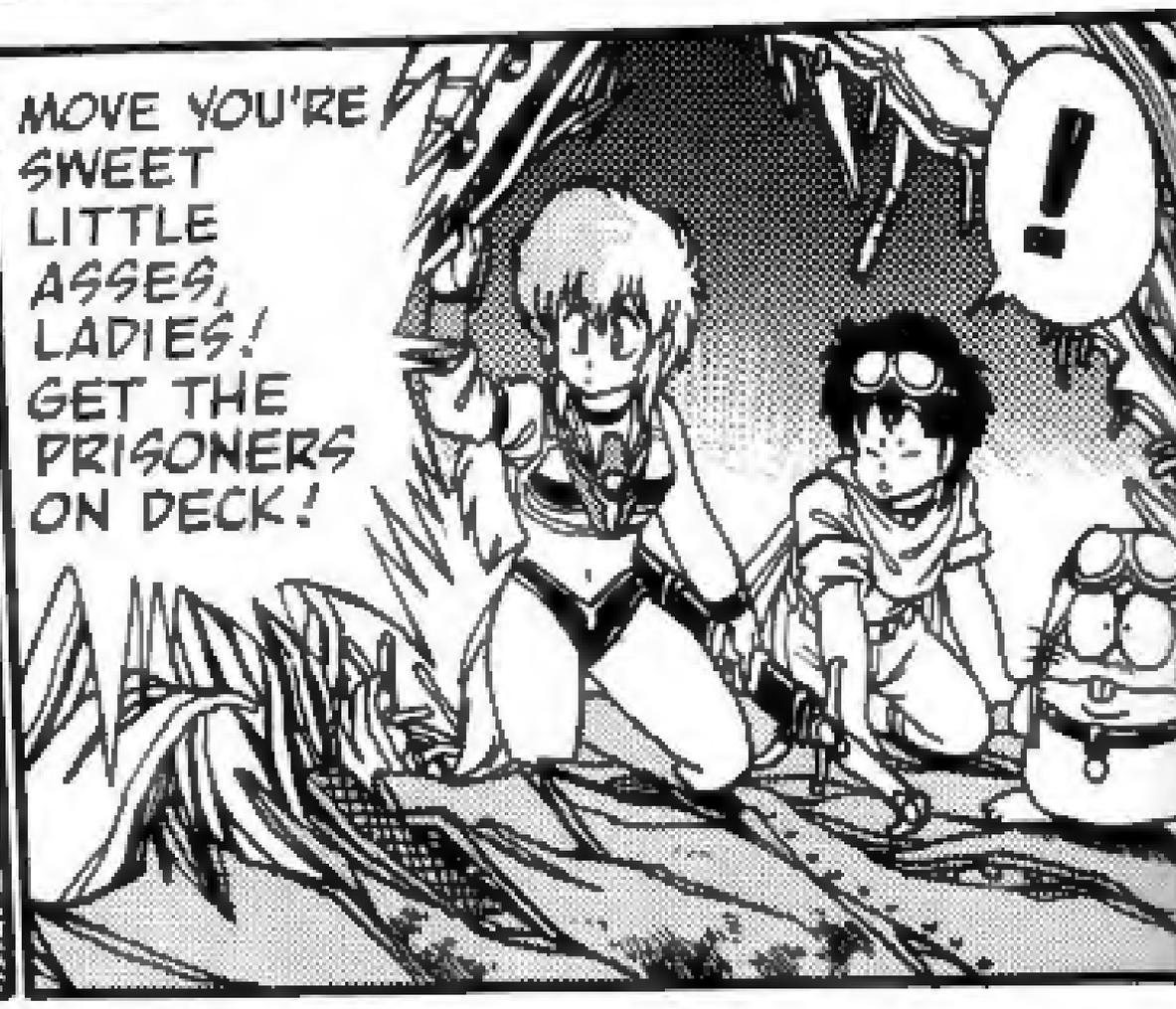
HOLD IT!

CRREF
RMBBBMBBBM



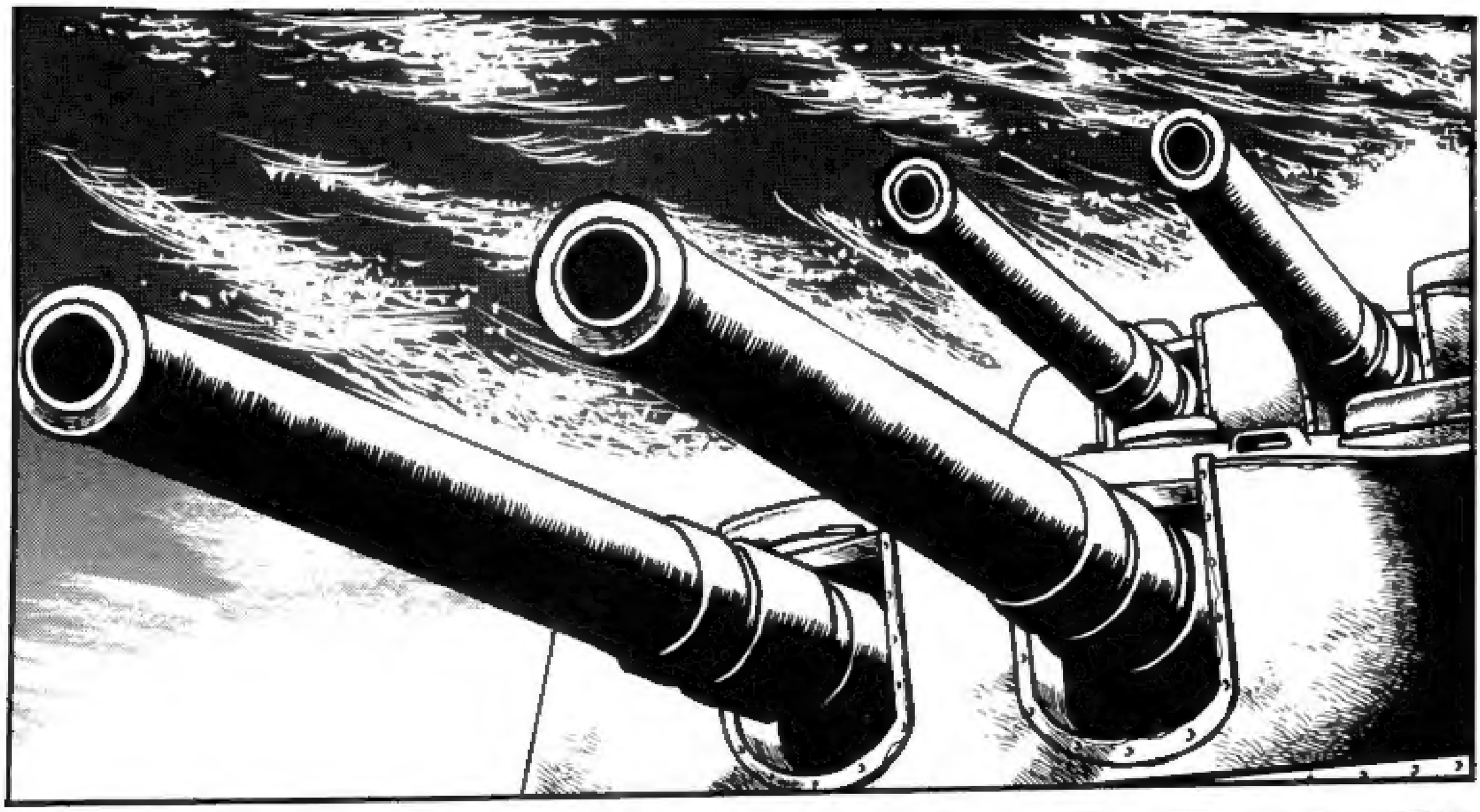
GRIEF
"GRIEF"...?

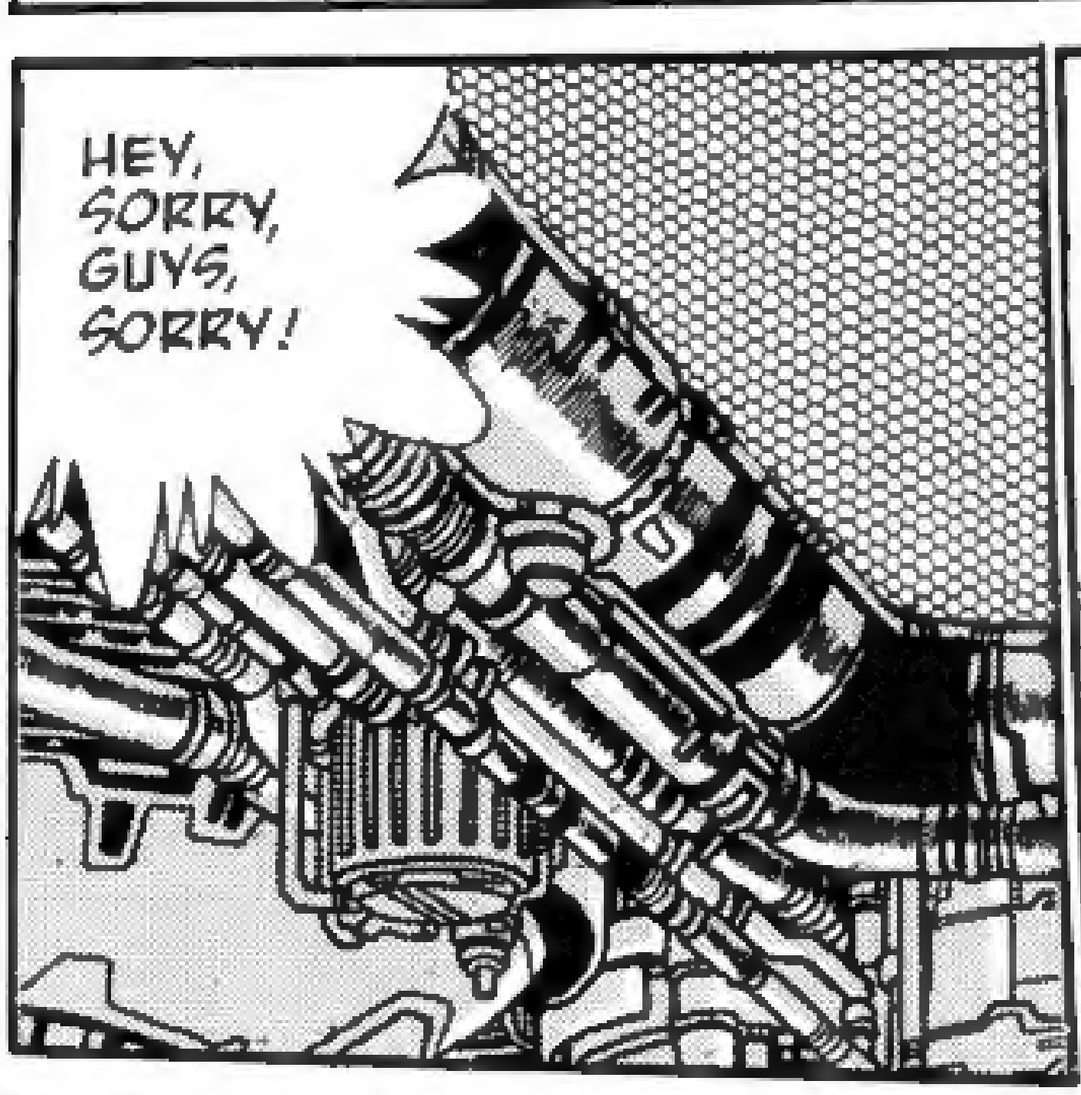
ISN'T THAT AN IMPERIAL HEAVY CRUISER?
YEAH... BUT WHY'S IT SAY "GRIEF" ?

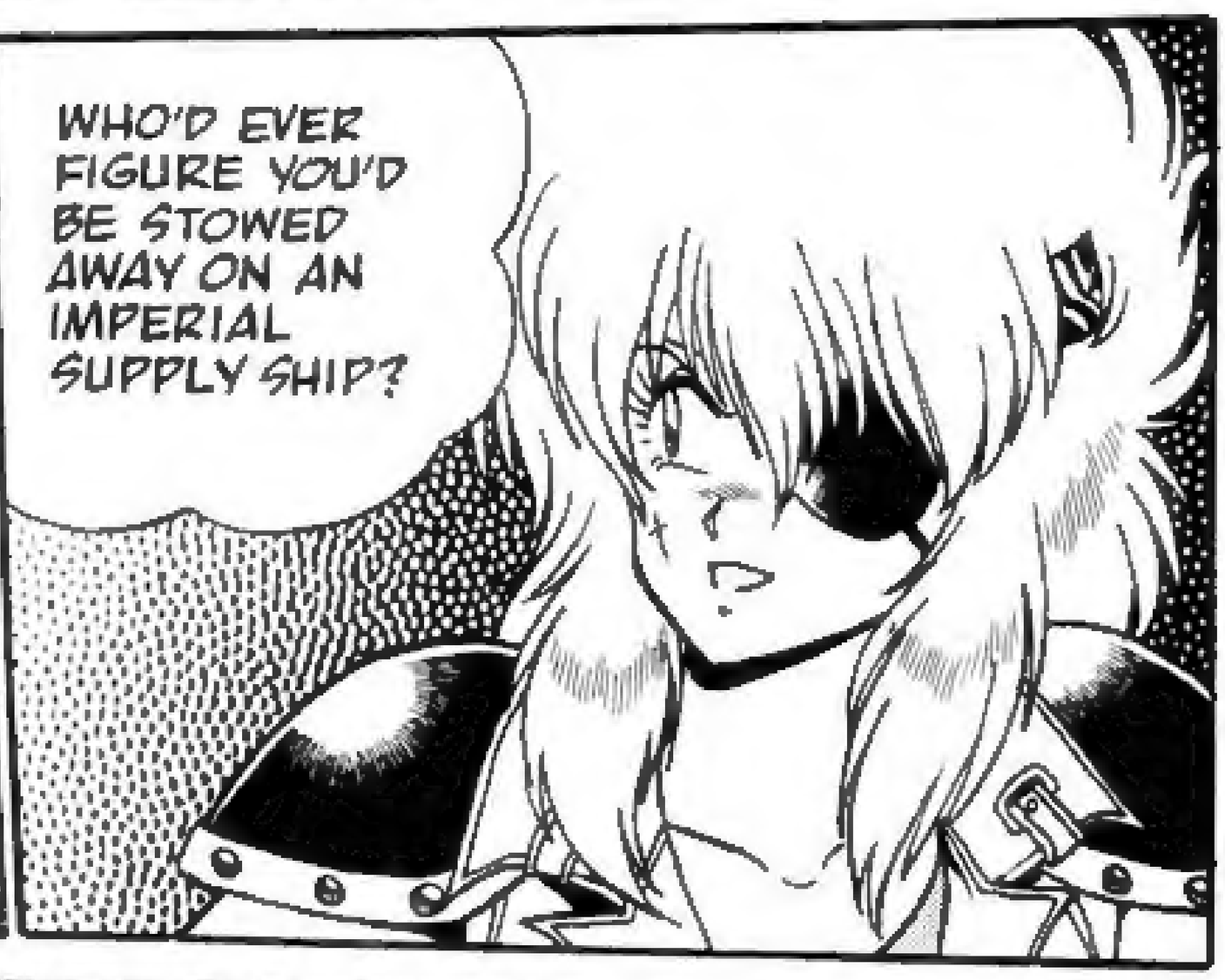

MOVE YOU'RE SWEET LITTLE ASSES, LADIES! GET THE PRISONERS ON DECK!
!

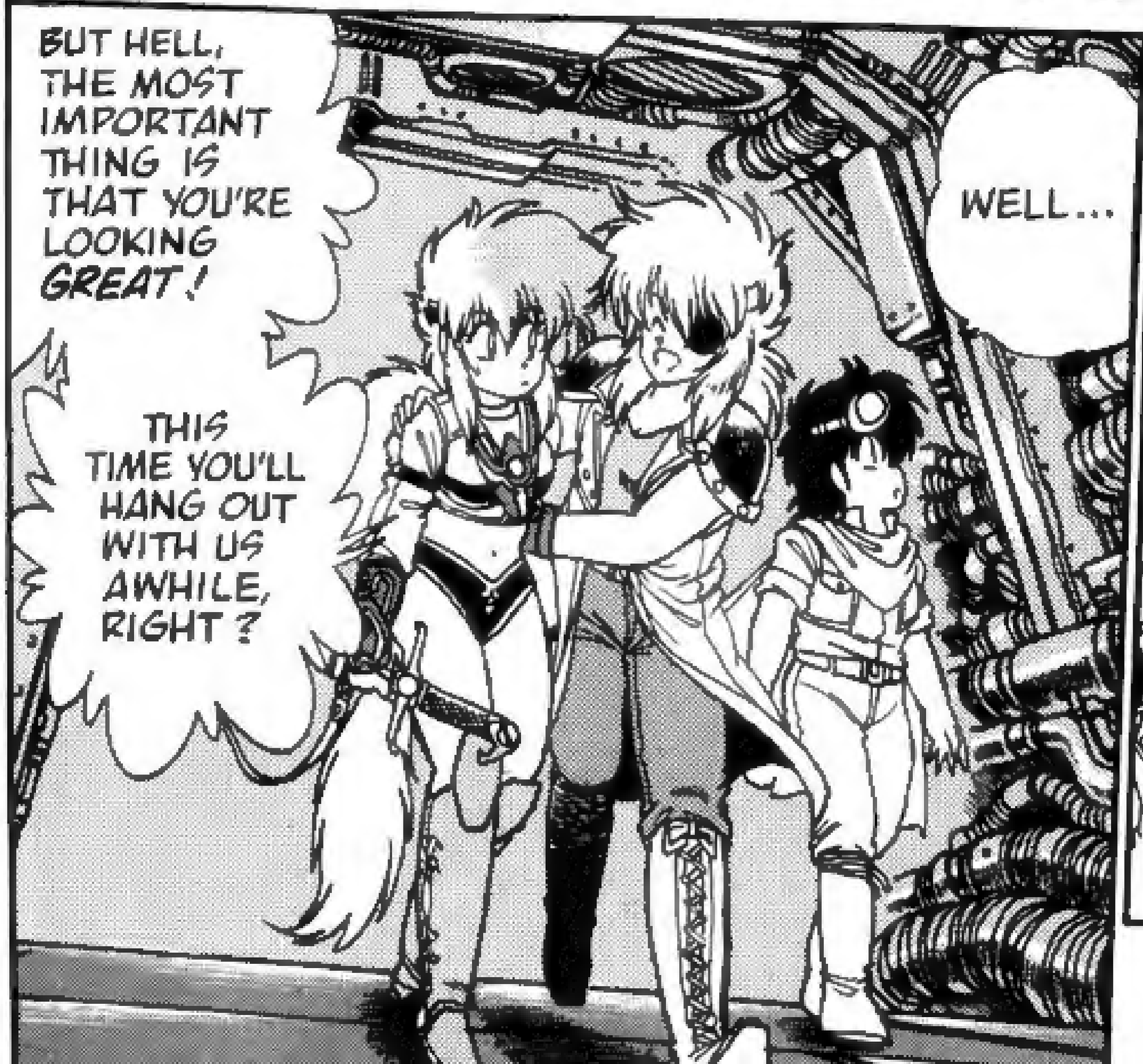
LISA! HAVE YOU WASTED THE COMM ROOM YET?
MICKY! TAKE TWO OR THREE OF THE GIRLS AND CHECK OUT THE CARGO!
HEY... ISN'T THAT-?!
WHAT THE-?!
KABA!!

BOOM
BOOM




HEY, SORRY, GUYS, SORRY!


WHO'D EVER FIGURE YOU'D BE STOWED AWAY ON AN IMPERIAL SUPPLY SHIP?


BUT HELL, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU'RE LOOKING GREAT!
WELL...
THIS TIME YOU'LL HANG OUT WITH US AWHILE, RIGHT?

AND YOU, WATARU, YA LITTLE GOOFBALL! YOU AIN'T CHANGED A BIT!
GEE, THANKS...

FORGET HIM... TELL ME ABOUT THIS SHIP NOT PLAYING PIRATES, ARE YOU?
LATER, LATER FIRST THINGS FIRST

LET'S HIT THE SHOWERS AND FRESHEN UP
AND THEN WE HOIST A FEW TO OUR REUNION!
....

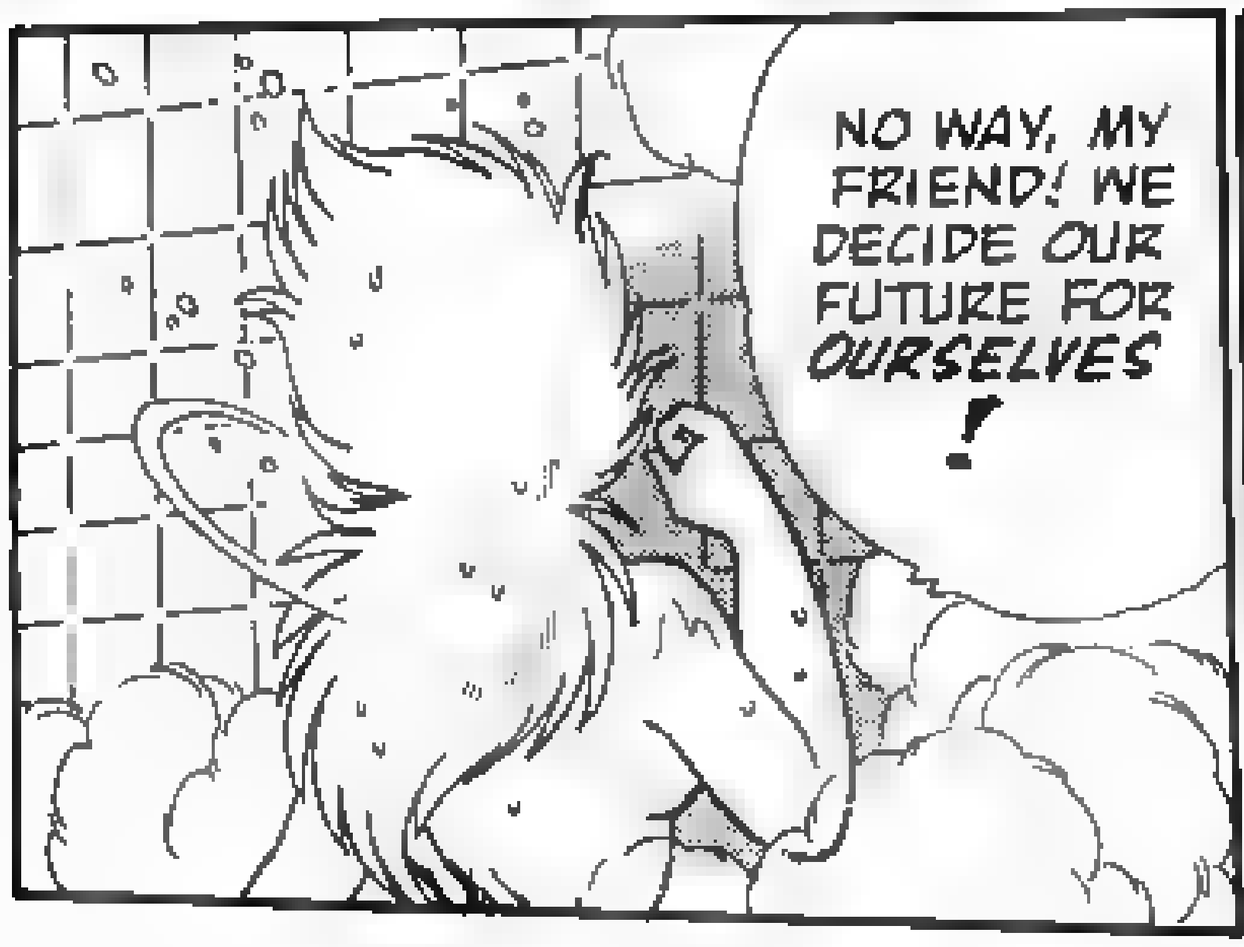
"SHOWER"..?!
SPSS

....
KHADA... THOSE SCARS...
THESE ?
OH, THE IMPERIALS HAVE GOTTEN THEIR HANDS ON ME ONCE OR TWICE.
THEY PLAY KIND OF ROUGH, DON'T THEY?
YEAH, BUT HEY... WE'RE BLOOD ENEMIES, SEE, BOTH SIDES.
GUESS I HAVE TO EXPECT THAT SORT OF THING.
IF THEY'RE YOUR ENEMIES, YOU MUST REALLY HATE THEM.
THE IMPERIAL ARMY, SHION...
THE EMPRESS? NEVER SEEN THE LADY
FOR ME, IT'S NOT SOMETHING PERSONAL, SEE?
HELL, FACT IS, IT'S NOT SUCH A BAD IDEA GETTING ALL THESE SHRIMP COUNTRIES TOGETHER INTO ONE BIG ONE.
FOR ALL I KNOW, SHE'S BUILDING A GODDAMN UTOPIA

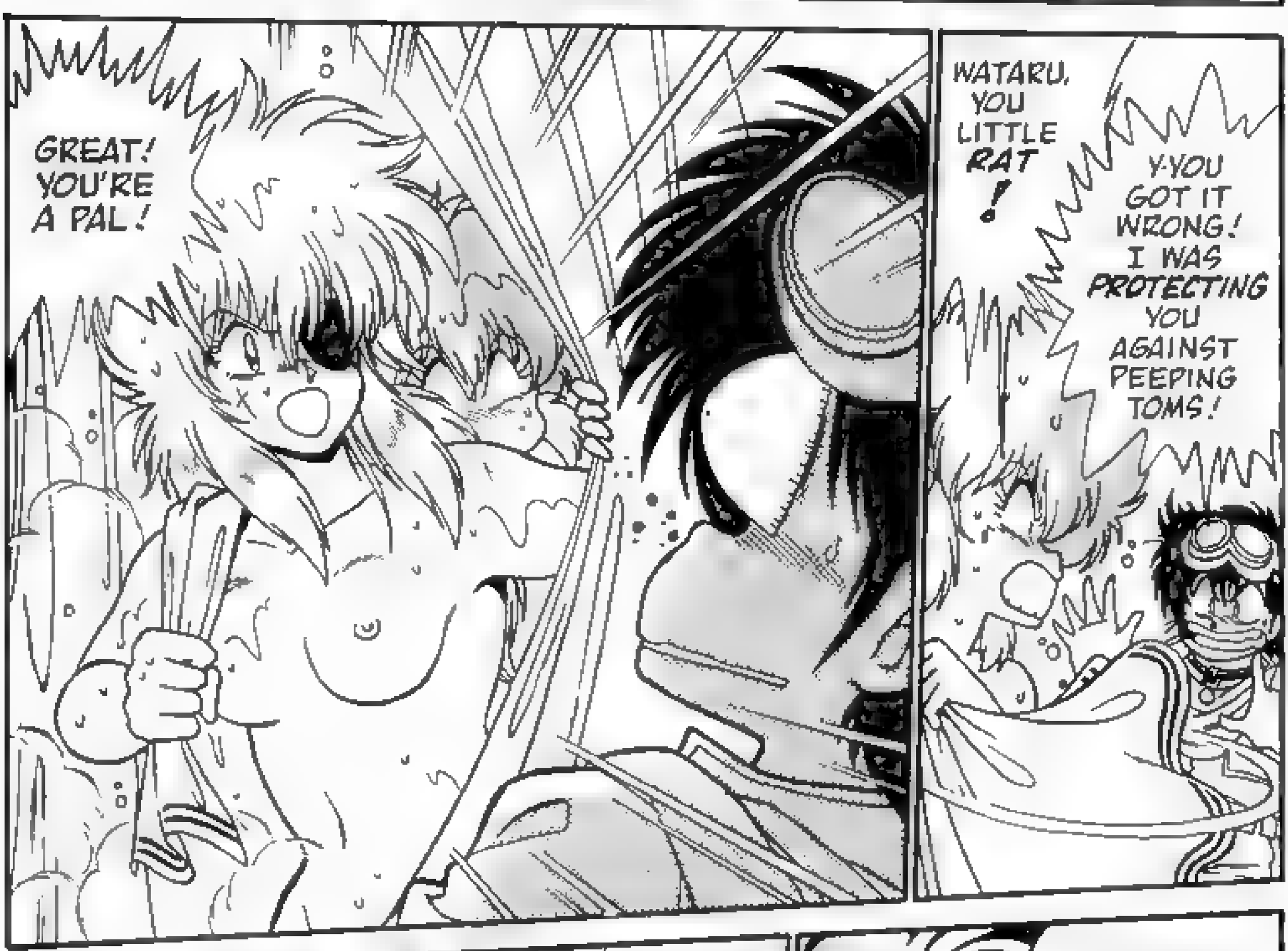
US? WE DON'T HAVE ANY IDEALS, OR MUCH OF A FUTURE.

BUT THE EMPIRE COMES AND STUFFS THEIR CRAP DOWN OUR THROATS ANYWAY!

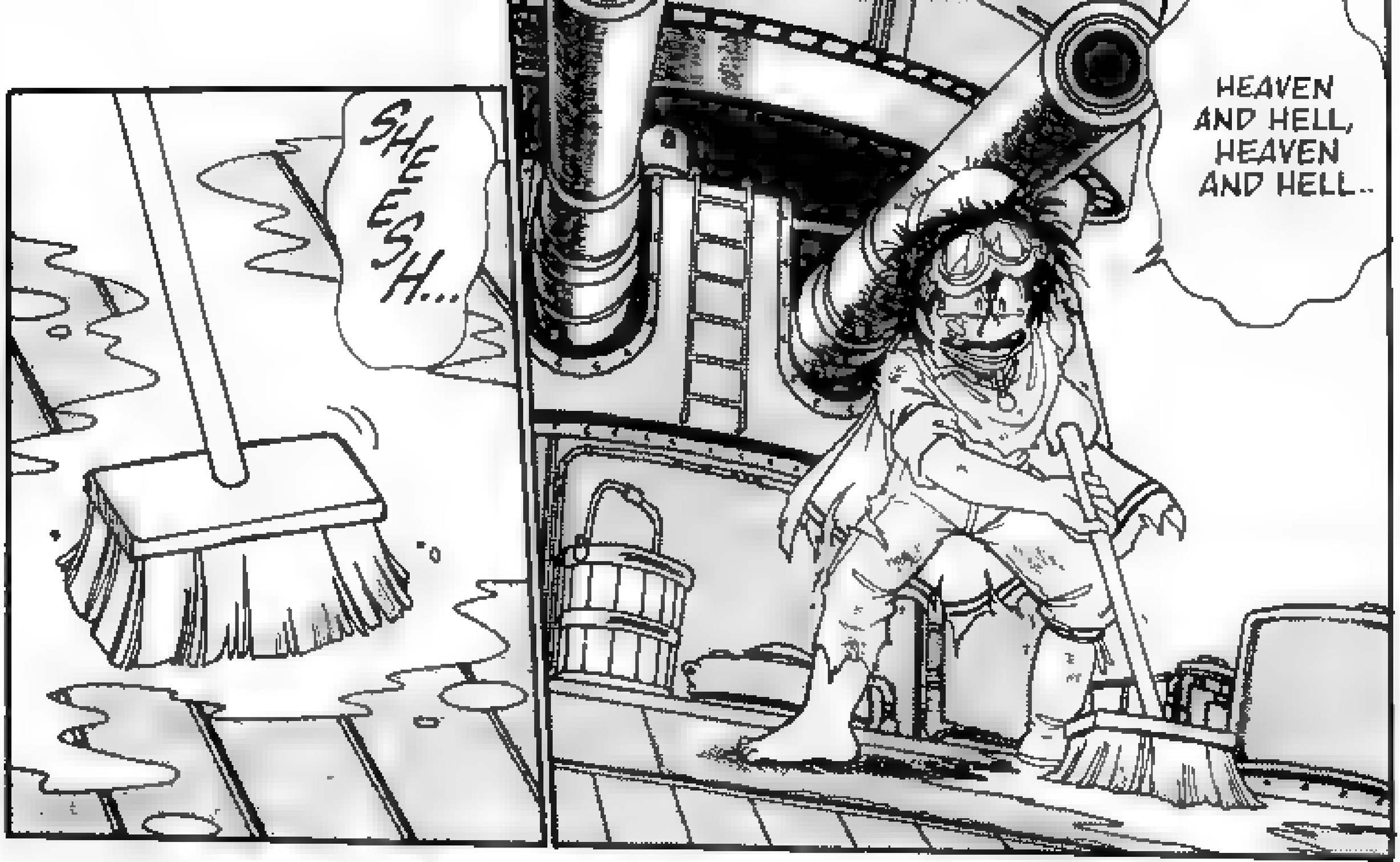
THEY THINK UTOPIA'S WORTH SACRIFICING A FEW "LOWLIFE BITCHES" ALONG THE WAY.



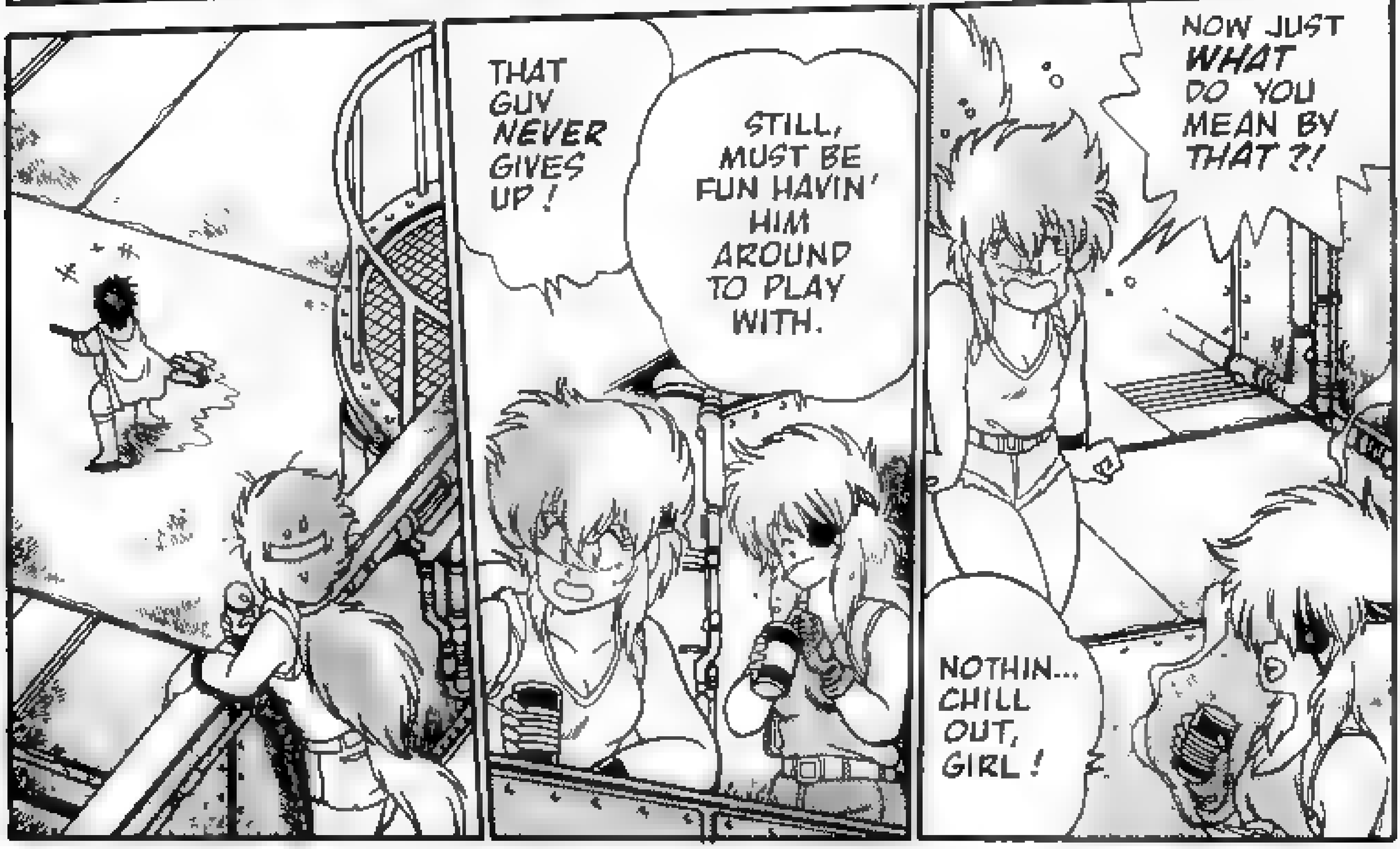
YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ANYONE, YOU CLOT!! HURRY UP!
YES, MA'AM! RIGHT AWAY, MA'AM!
HERE Y'ARE..


GREAT! YOU'RE A PAL!
WATARU, YOU LITTLE RAT!
Y-YOU GOT IT WRONG! I WAS PROTECTING YOU AGAINST PEEPING TOMS!

WHO'S GOING TO PEEP EXCEPT YOU?!
HNG
WELL, HE'S A BOY, RIGHT? NO BIG SURPRISE.
ANYWAY, NOW YOU HAVE SOME NICE MEMORIES TO TAKE TO HELL WITH YOU, EH, WATARU?!
KRAK


HEAVEN AND HELL, HEAVEN AND HELL...
SHE ESH...

AND YET... I HAVE SEEN THE THING I ENJOY MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE!
NOW I CAN DIE IN PEACE!


THAT GUY NEVER GIVES UP!
STILL, MUST BE FUN HAVIN' HIM AROUND TO PLAY WITH.
NOW JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?!
NOTHIN... CHILL OUT, GIRL!

I WILL...IF YOU TELL ME HOW YOU GOT THIS SHIP. IT'S IMPERIAL, RIGHT?

STOLE IT!

YOU STOLE IT?!

CAUGHT UP WITH IT PATROLLING THE OCCUPIED ZONE, WENT THROUGH THE HULL WITH SHAPED CHARGES, SQUIRTED IN A SHOT OF **SCOLEX** GAS, AND ROTTED OUT THE SPINAL COLUMNS OF EVERY GUY ON BOARD.

EASIER THAN I THOUGHT, ACTUALLY.

COOL! AND NOW YOU'RE THE PIRATE QUEEN, EH?

BUT YOU'RE DICING WITH DEATH WHEN YOU'RE IN IMPERIAL TERRITORY

IT'S DAMN DANGEROUS, AND IT'S NOT AS IF THERE'S A LOT OF PREY...

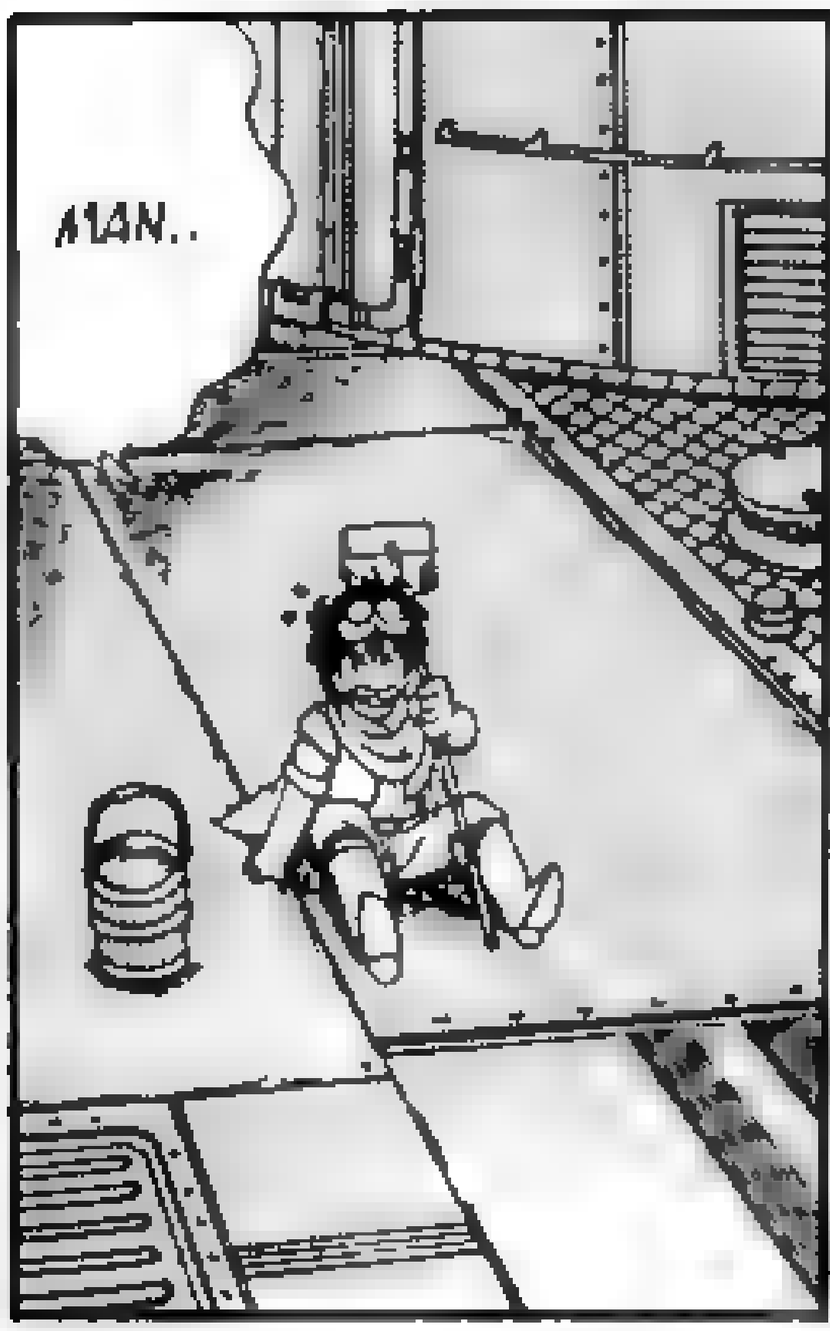
WE'RE NOT PIRATES, MIAN.

WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A MISSION.

A MISSION?

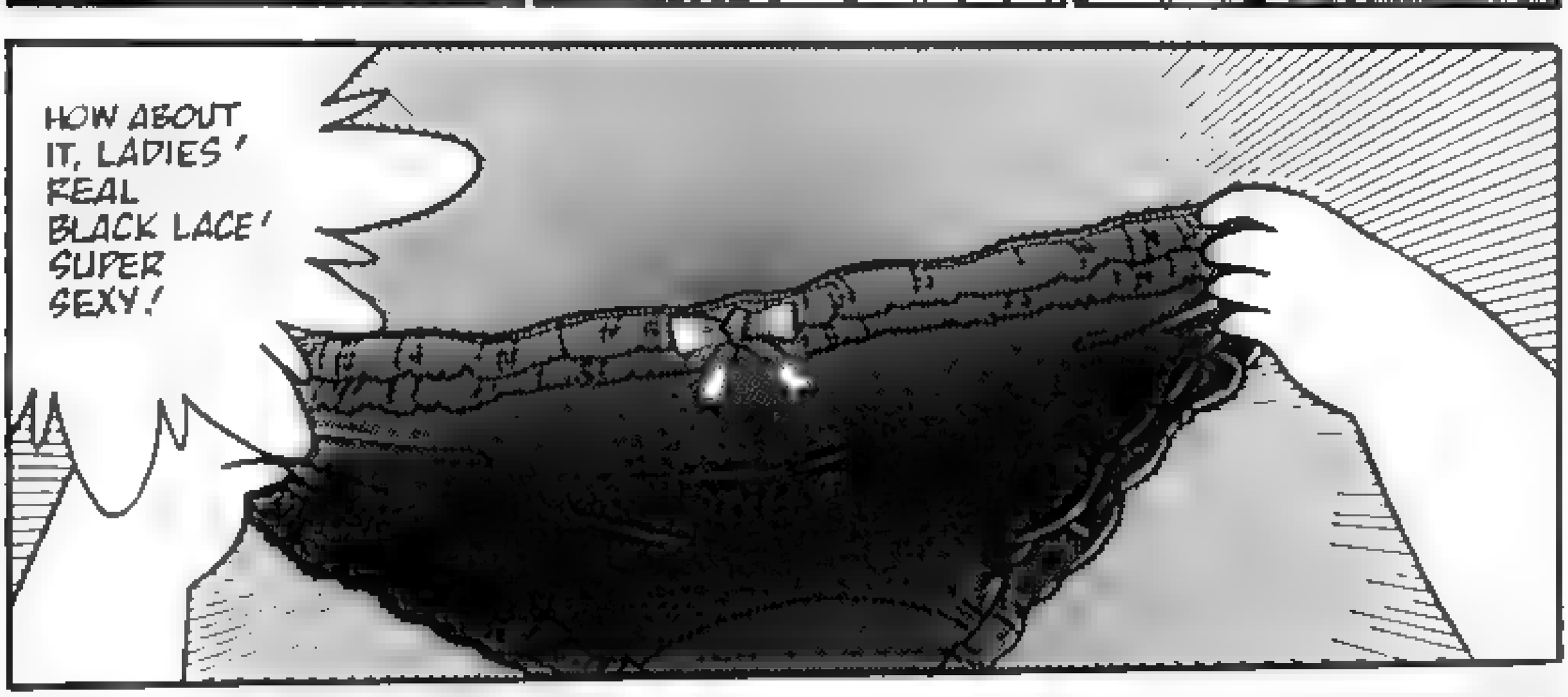
COME ON.

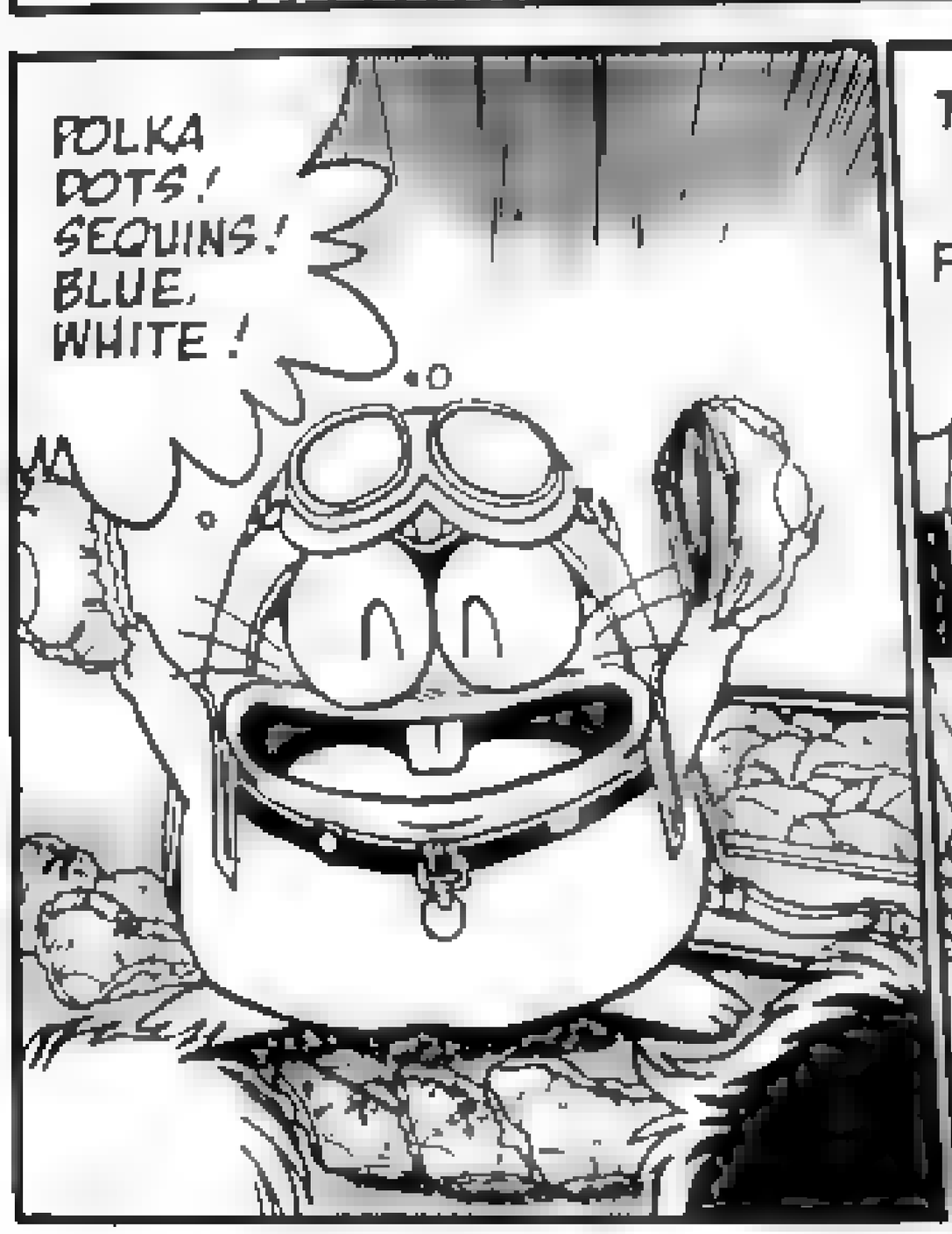
LET'S TALK ON THE BRIDGE.

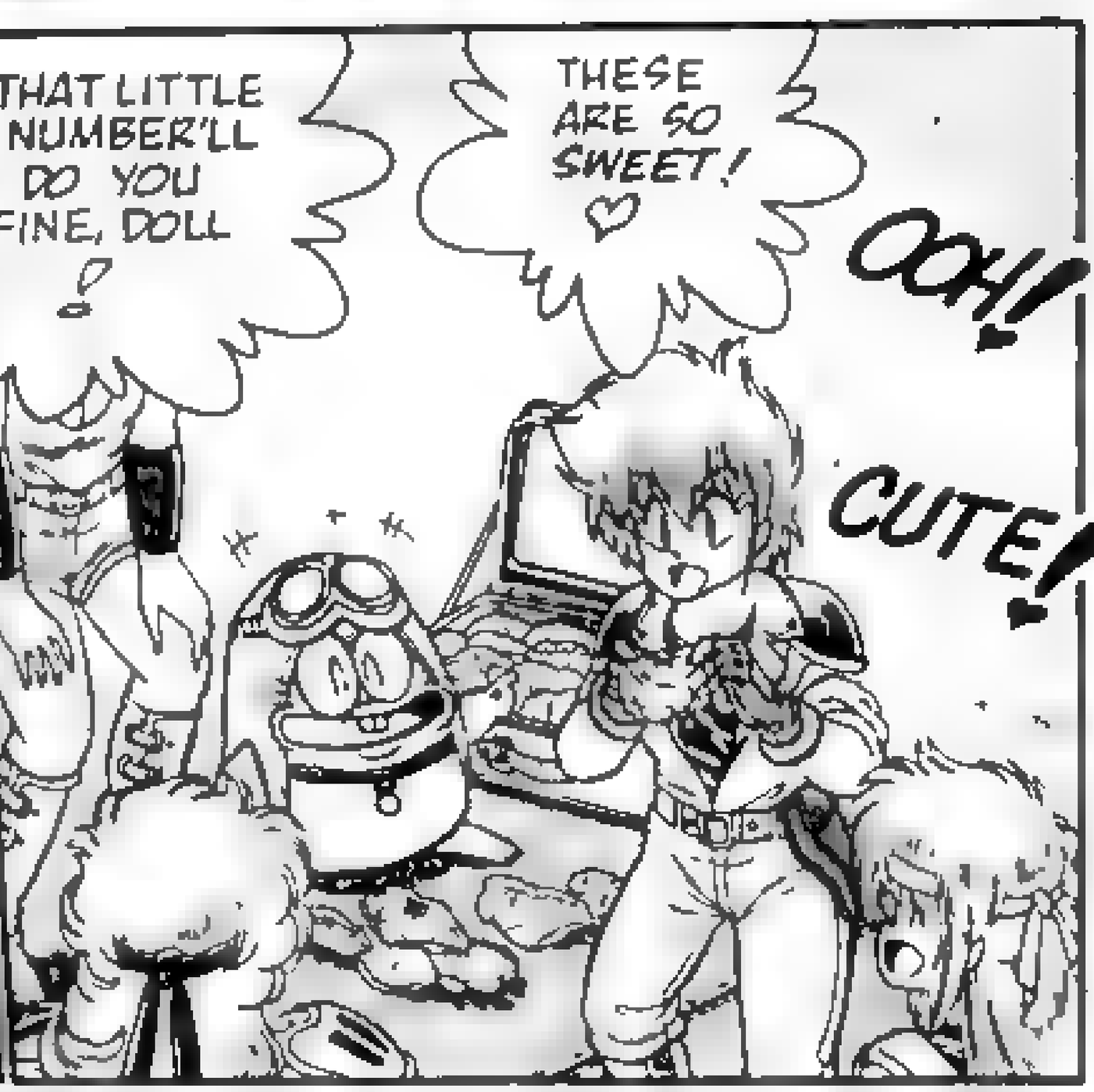

MAN..

I'M SUPPOSED TO SCRUB THIS WHOLE SHIP BY MYSELF?
PRETTY STEEP PRICE FOR ONE PEEK!

NOW, IF I'D ONLY GOTTEN A FEEL


HOW ABOUT IT, LADIES! REAL BLACK LACE! SUPER SEXY!


POLKA DOTS! SEQUINS! BLUE, WHITE!


THAT LITTLE NUMBER'LL DO YOU FINE, DOLL!
THESE ARE SO SWEET!
OOH!!
CUTE!

I'LL TAKE THIS PAIR!

HEY, I SAW THEM FIRST!

I'D LIKE THESE, TOO!

DON'T PUSH, SWEETIES! THERE'S PLENTY FOR ALL!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE DOING ALL RIGHT.

HEY, WATARU! FINALLY!

TAKE OVER FOR ME FOR A SEC.

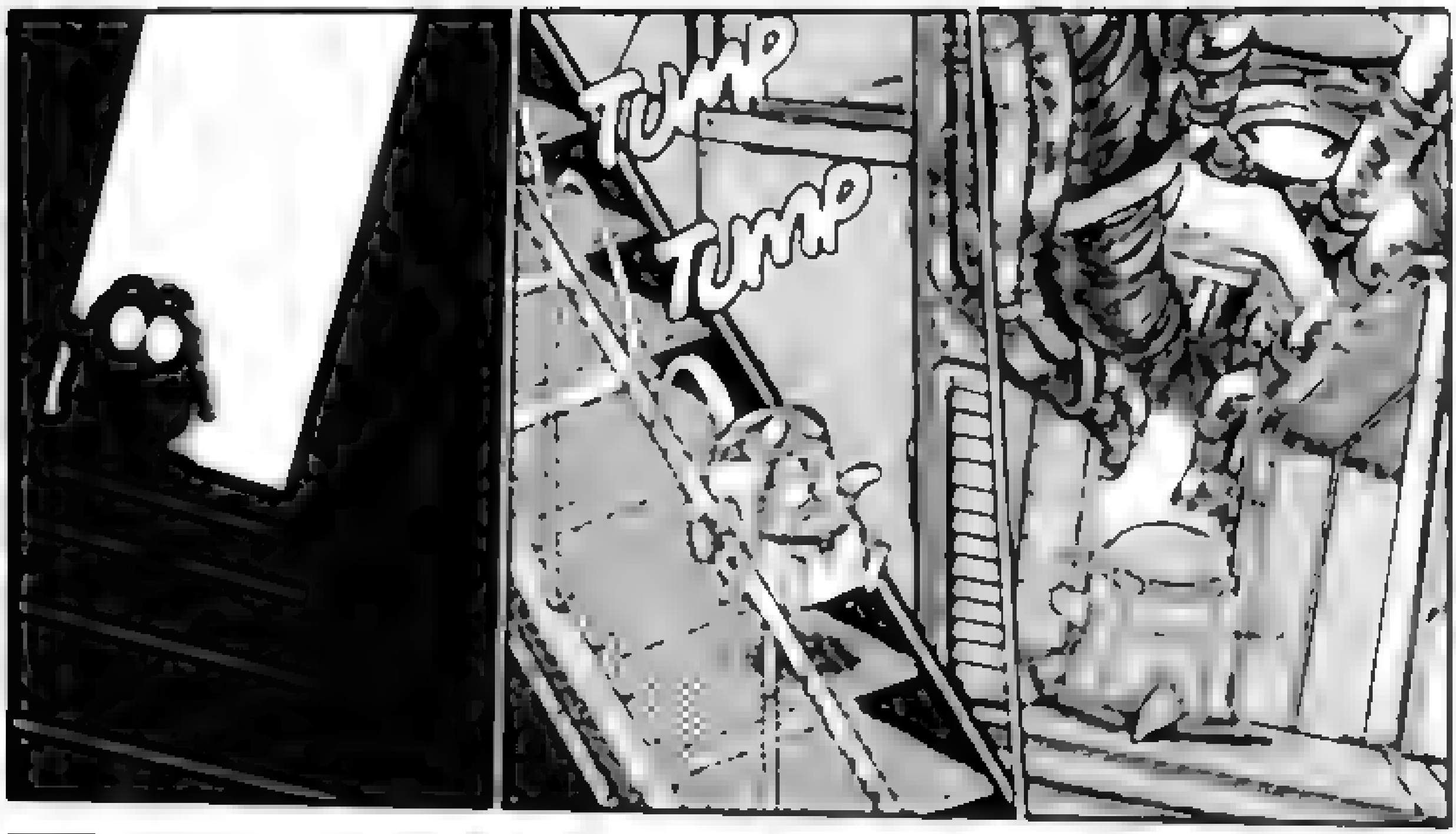
HEY! WHERE'RE YOU GOING ?!

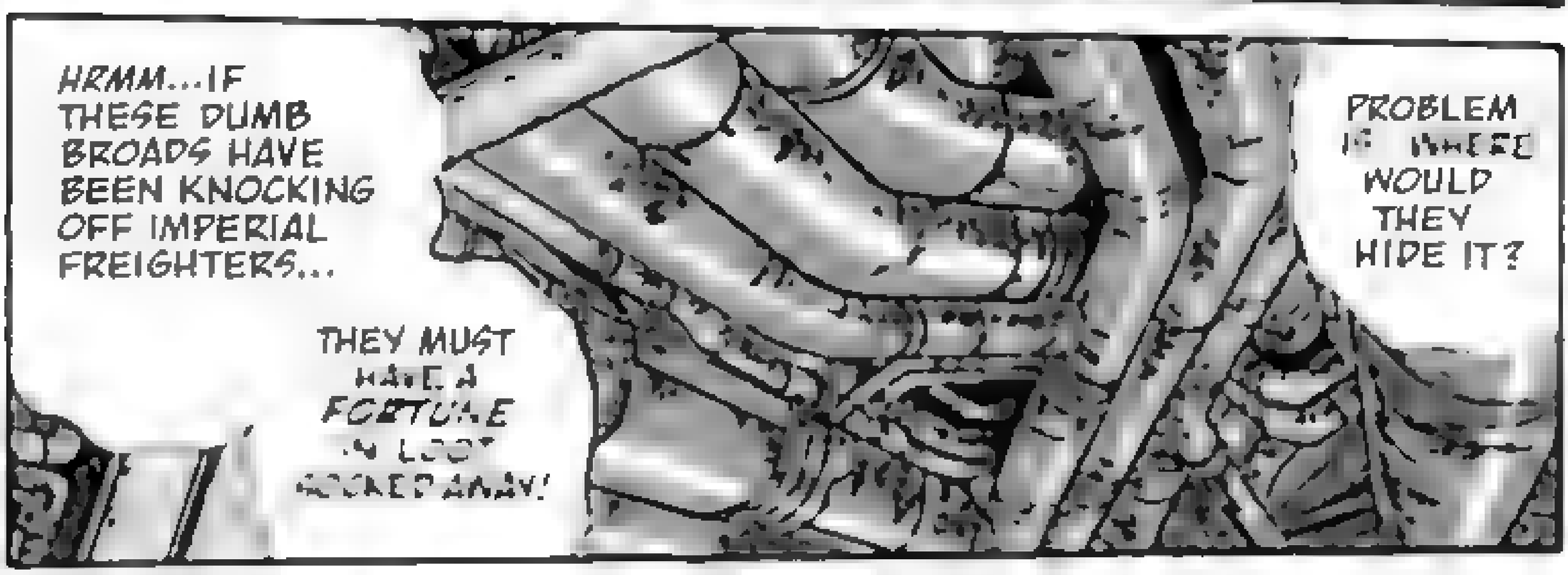
BACK SOON!

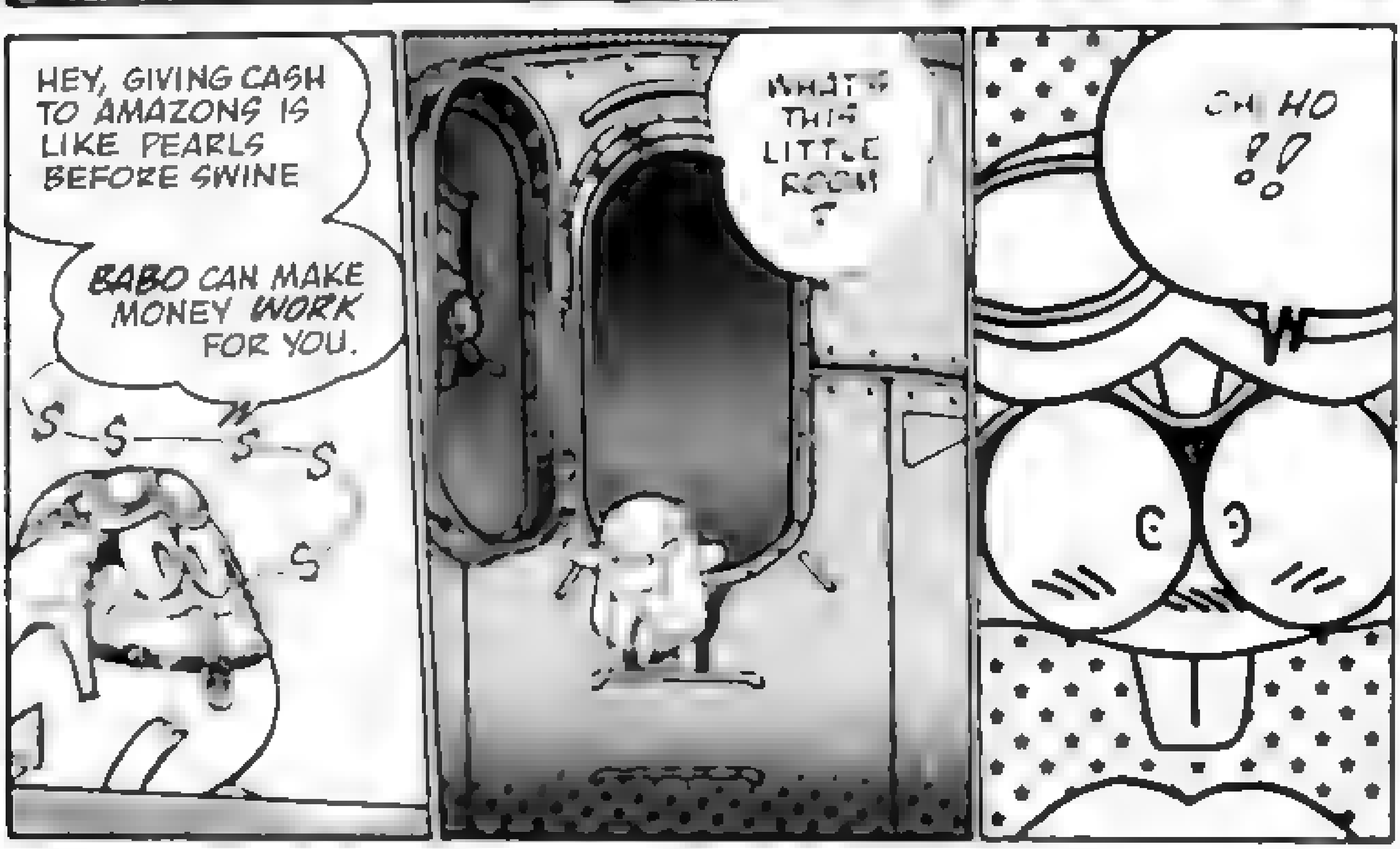
HAW, HAW! LOOKIT HIM BLUSH!

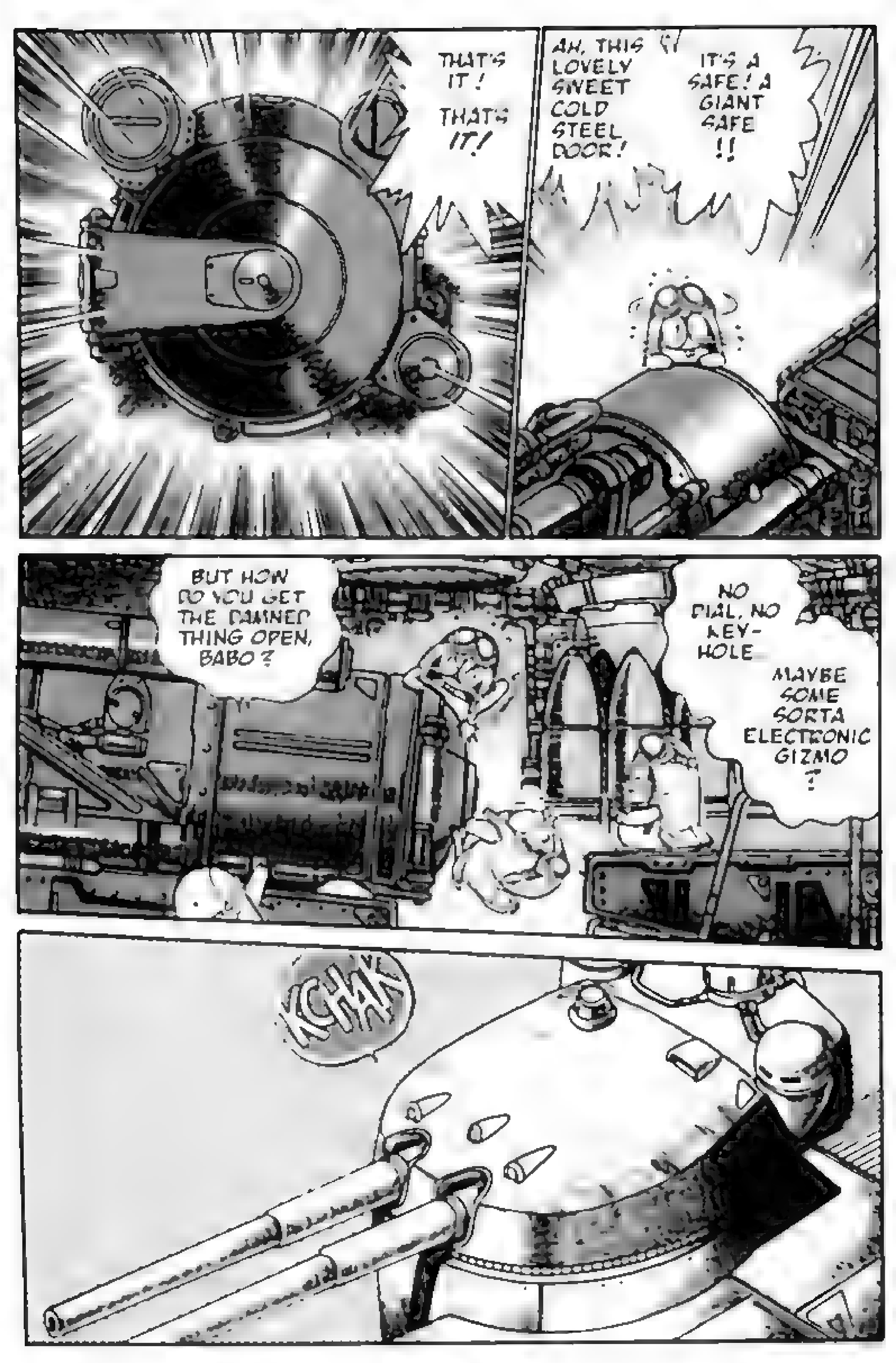
THE PEEPING TOM'S A VIRGIN!

WHAT! WHO TOLD YOU ABOUT THAT?!


TUMP
TUMP


HRMM...IF THESE DUMB BROADS HAVE BEEN KNOCKING OFF IMPERIAL FREIGHTERS...
THEY MUST HAVE A FORTUNE IN LOOT STOCKED AWAY!
PROBLEM IS WHERE WOULD THEY HIDE IT?


HEY, GIVING CASH TO AMAZONS IS LIKE PEARLS BEFORE SWINE
BABO CAN MAKE MONEY WORK FOR YOU.
WHAT'S THIS LITTLE ROOM?
OH NO!!


THAT'S IT!
THAT'S IT!
AH, THIS LOVELY SWEET COLD STEEL DOOR!
IT'S A SAFE! A GIANT SAFE!!
BUT HOW DO YOU GET THE DAMNED THING OPEN, BABO?
NO DIAL, NO KEY-HOLE
MAYBE SOME SORTA ELECTRONIC GIZMO?
KCHAK

YOU'RE REALLY PILOTING THIS WHOLE SHIP YOURSELVES ?

YEAH, SURE..

'COURSE, WE'VE ONLY HAD A COUPLE OF MONTHS TO TRAIN SINCE WE RIPPED HER OFF.

SO WE'RE NOT READY TO GO UP AGAINST THEIR CAPITAL SHIPS, NOT A CHANCE!

OH, LOOK! WITH KHADA! ISN'T THAT *MIAN TORIS*?

YOU'RE RIGHT!

OH, WOW! THE REAL MIAN TORIS!

ER. HI THERE

HEH

MIAN ..

YOU'RE BOUND FOR KYURAWEIL KEEP, RIGHT?

REALLY?! IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T YOU TRAVEL WITH US?

WHAT? YOU MEAN YOU'RE--

YOU GOT IT. WE'RE BOUND FOR KYURAWEIL, TOO. WE'RE GONNA TAKE IT!

WHAT?! ARE YOU *NUTS*?! WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH ONE SHIP?!

THAT'S *SUICIDE*, AND YOU KNOW IT!

AND WHAT IF IT'S NOT ONE SHIP?

HUH..?

WHAT IF WE'RE NOT ALONE?!

"THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY"...

?!

ALL THE NATIONAL ARMIES DISBANDED BY HELGEBARD. ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE RESISTANCE.

ALL OF US, EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN FIGHTING UNDERGROUND ALL THESE YEARS, WE'VE ALL COME TOGETHER-- ONE GIANT FIST OF STEEL!

I HAD NO IDEA THERE WERE SO MANY OF YOU

WELL, THAT'S NOT SURPRISING. WE'VE HAD TO WORK IN TOTAL SECRECY.

SO WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

TAKE A LOOK.

THIS IS THE GUSTAV LINE, THE EMPIRE'S BORDER FORTRESS.

OUR MAIN FORCES ARE COMING TOGETHER HERE: 240 KILOMETERS SOUTH.

BUT...BUT THAT MEANS YOU'RE ALL ALONE IN IMPERIAL TERRITORY!

CALM DOWN AND LISTEN, OKAY? IF WE HIT THE GUSTAV LINE, THE IMPERIALS'LL POUR IN REINFORCEMENTS.

AND THAT'S WHERE WE COME IN! WE HIT THE SUPPLY LINES, RIP 'EM UP FROM BEHIND!

WITHOUT REINFORCEMENTS, THE GUSTAV LINE WON'T HOLD A DAY...WE'LL PUNCH THROUGH IT.

AND AFTER THAT, IT'S ALL OVER.

ONCE THE FIGHTING SPREADS, THE RESISTANCE INSIDE THE EMPIRE ITSELF WILL RISE UP.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPERIAL ARMY, KHADA... OR EMPRESS SHION!

GRANGRANGRAN
THE IMPERIAL ARMY'S ENORMOUS.
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BE IMPRESSED BY SOME RAGTAG BUNCH OF AMATEURS
.....
HELL, WE ALL KNOW THAT, MIAN
WE DON'T EXPECT TO BRING DOWN THE EMPIRE ALL WE WANT IS ONE GOOD VICTORY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST A GIANT, ALL YOU CAN DO IS CHEW HIM UP FROM INSIDE...LIKE BACTERIA
WE NEED ONE GOOD VICTORY TO SPREAD THAT
"TO SPREAD IT ALL OVER THE CONTINENT!"

TOMORROW MORNING, OUR MAIN FORCE STRIKES THE GUSTAV LINE!
GERMANGAN

STEEL STORM TRIAL BY FIRE

LET US BEGIN! KESSELRING ?!

YOUR HIGHNESS, ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN THE PITIFUL STRUGGLES OF THIS ALLEGED "REBEL ARMY."

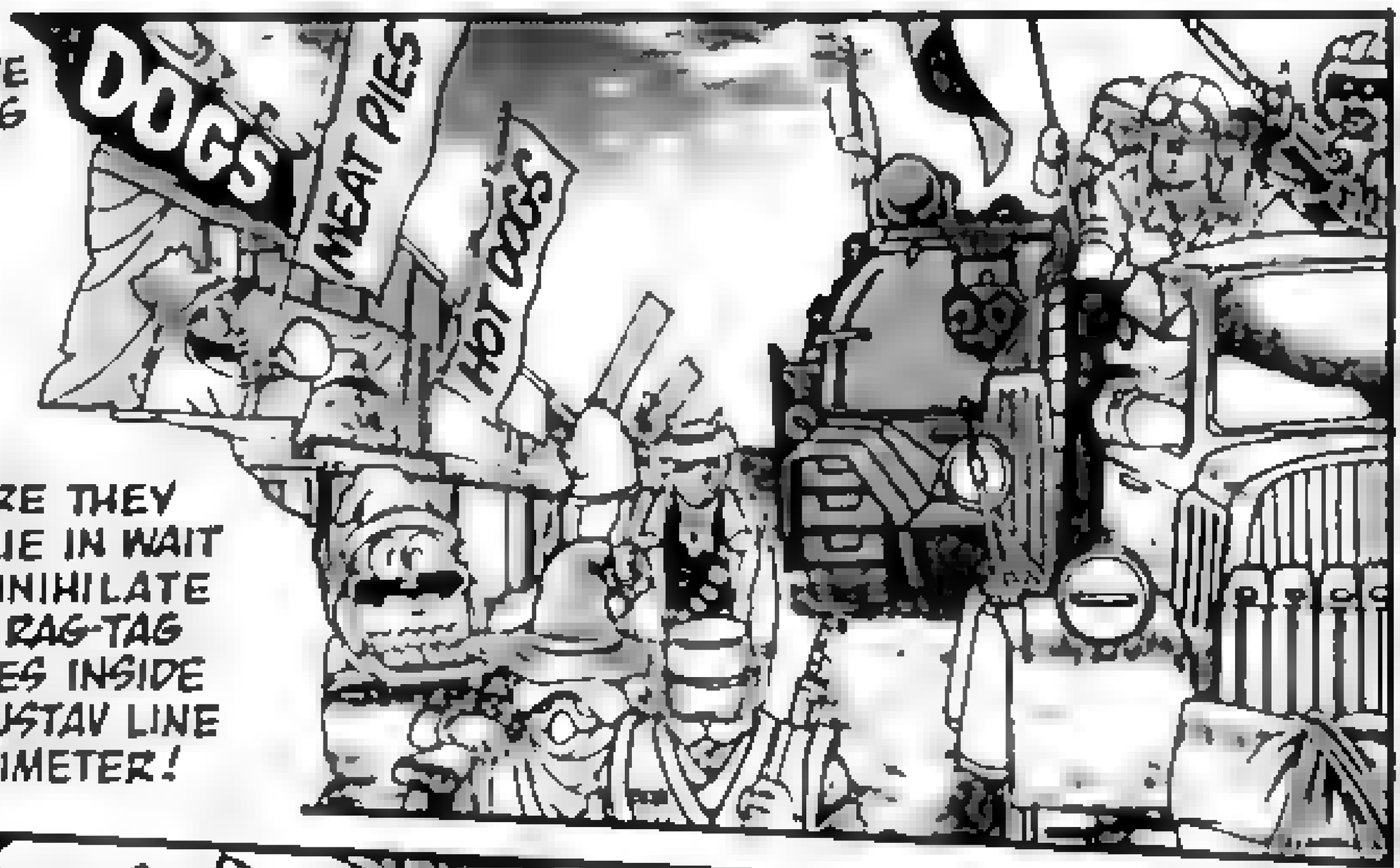
ON FEBRUARY 28TH OF THIS, THE FIRST YEAR OF THE *SHION EPOCH*, REBEL FORCES RAISED ARMS IN ALL OF OUR EMPIRE'S COLONIES.

THEIR CORE FORCE IS COMPOSED OF REMNANTS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMIES OF *EKODA* AND *NERIMA*. ESTIMATED TROOP STRENGTH: TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND! THEY'RE SUPPORTED BY ANOTHER 30,000 ARMED CIVILIANS.

BEFORE DAWN THIS MORNING, THE REBELS RASHLY LAUNCHED A SUICIDAL ASSAULT ON THE OUTER RAMPARTS OF THE GUSTAV LINE.

OUR BORDER UNITS MOVED INSTANTLY TO COUNTERATTACK. THEY INFLICTED GREVIOUS LOSSES ON THE ENEMY, SERIOUSLY ERODING THEIR FLIMSY MORALE.

OUR TROOPS ARE NOW EXECUTING A TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL TO MORE FAVORABLE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.



THERE THEY WILL LIE IN WAIT TO ANNIHILATE THE RAG-TAG FORCES INSIDE THE GUSTAV LINE PERIMETER!

DO YOU THINK I'M DEAF AND BLIND ?!

YOUR HIGHNESS ?

WE HAVE NO EXCUSE.

THE ENEMY APPEARS TO BE GAINING MOMENTUM, AND IS EVEN NOW ADVANCING THROUGH OUR FORTIFICATIONS.

BUT FEAR NOT, YOUR MAJESTY ?

GENERAL MANSTEIN, IS IT ?

YES, YOUR MAJESTY. EVEN AS WE SPEAK, THE TWENTY DIVISIONS OF THIRD ARMORED ARMY GROUP UNDER GENERAL LUNSCHTED ARE MOVING TO REINFORCE THE LINE.

WE HAVE DEPLOYED FIFTY-FOUR HEAVY ARTILLERY REGIMENTS IN THE REBELS' PATH.

GIVEN OUR OVERWHELMING FIREPOWER, IT SHOULD TAKE NO MORE THAN A DAY TO CRUSH THEM ONCE AND FOR ALL.

YOU FOOL.

YOUR MAJESTY... ?

YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU, MANSTEIN? OF COURSE THE OUTCOME IS CLEAR.

BUT OUR IMPERIAL ARMY CANNOT AFFORD TO BE SEEN COMMITTING MAJOR FORCES AGAINST A MERE REBEL UPRISING.

IF ANYTHING SHOULD GO WRONG AND THE FIGHTING DRAG ON, IT WILL INVITE A SECOND REBELLION, A THIRD, MORE!!

THAT'S WHAT THE REBELS THEM-SELVES ARE COUNTING ON.

THIS BATTLE IS A *DEMONSTRATION!* IT'S A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION BY THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE THRONE.

AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHY WE MUST ACT BEFORE THEY GENERATE TOO MUCH PROPAGANDA.

WE MUST SHOW TO ONE AND ALL THE *TRUE* POWER OF THE EMPIRE!

THAT'S RIGHT-- ANNIHILATE THEM! *WITH A SINGLE BLOW!*

WHAT'S THIS?

BRAMBBB
WH-WHAT ON EARTH WAS THAT ?!
IT'S FROM THE GUSTAV LINE !
IT'S A THERMONUCLEAR BOMB !
A WHAT ?!!
KHADA! WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH OUR MAIN FORCES!
!!!

HQ, THIS IS GRIEF! COME IN, HQ! OVER!

THIS IS KHADA! CRUISER ELVERAS, COME IN! OVER!

CRUISER LAMIZ! COME IN, OVER!

ANSWER ME, ANYONE!

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE...

ALL OF THEM... GONE?!

WHRAK

SHIT, SHIT, SHIT!!

IT CAN'T BE...IT CAN'T!!

SHION... YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS...

KHADA, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

IT'S JUST US, NOW...

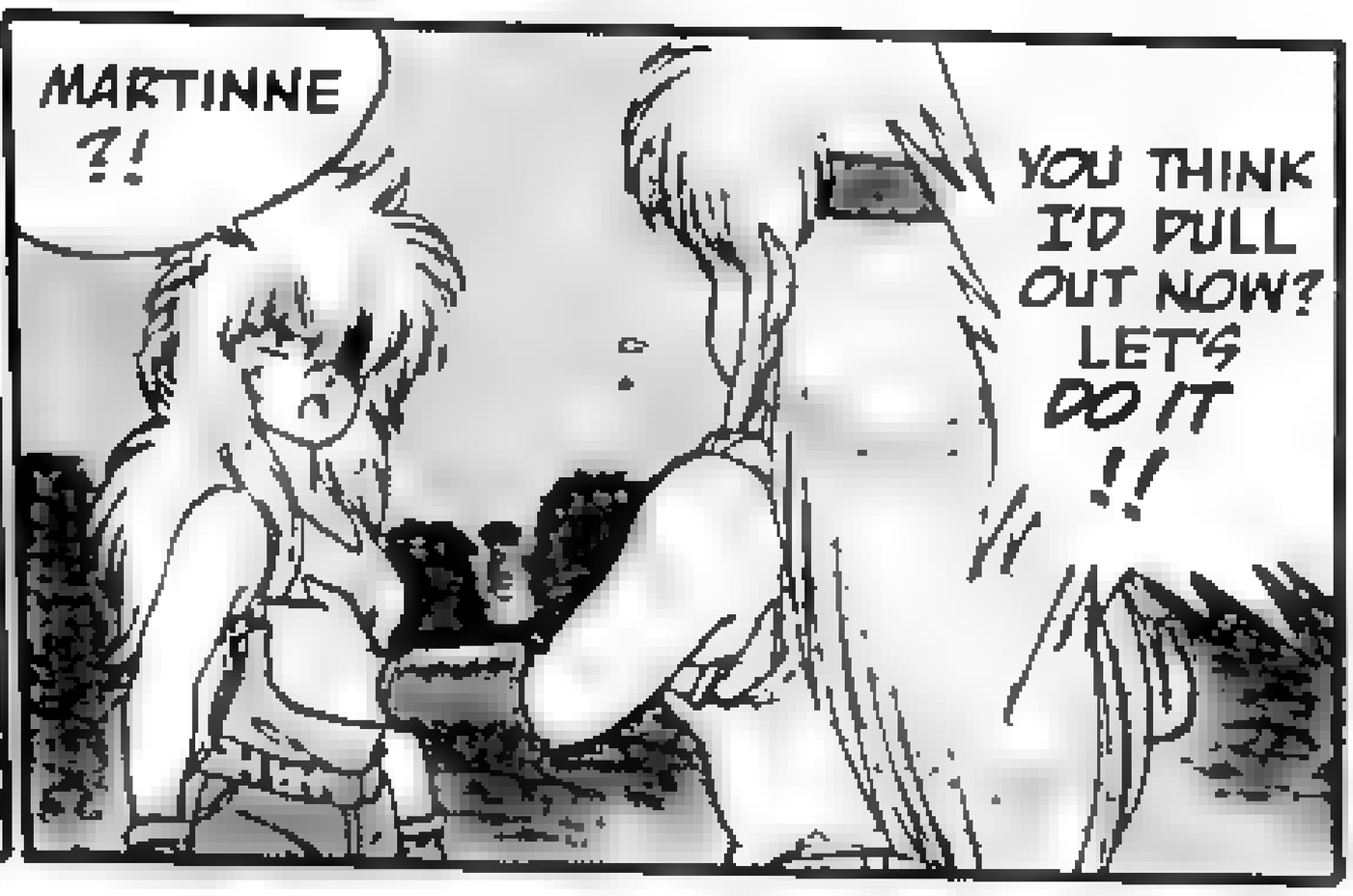
AS OF THIS INSTANT, WE HAVE BEEN CUT OFF, TRAPPED IN THE ENEMY'S GRASP.
WE MAY NOT GET OUT OF THIS ONE ALIVE.

WE HAVE ONLY TWO OPTIONS.

THE OTHER IS TO KEEP GOING AND SMASH OUR WAY INTO KYURAWEIL KEEP!!

ONE IS TO ABANDON THIS SHIP, AND SURRENDER TO THE EMPIRE.

LUNA ?!
YOU NEED TO ASK? KEEP FIGHTING !!


MARTINNE ?!
YOU THINK I'D PULL OUT NOW? LET'S DO IT !!

DAMN RIGHT! LET'S TAKE THEM OUT! WE'LL SHOW THEM WHAT WE'RE MADE OF!
NO WAY CAN WE LOSE TO THOSE IMPERIAL SLIME !

MIAN ?!

HUH ?

YOU HEARD THEM.

WE MEAN TO KEEP FIGHTING, RIGHT TO THE END.

NOW...YOU TAKE *WATARU* AND GET THE *HELL* OFF OUR SHIP!!

BUT, KHADA, IF--

THANKS, MIAN. BUT YOU'VE GOT NO REASON TO FIGHT OUR BATTLES FOR US.

YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN DESTINATION, YOUR OWN MISSION.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU MEAN TO DO AT KYURAWEIL KEEP, GIRL...

BUT WE'LL RACE YOU TO SEE WHO GETS THERE FIRST!

KHADA...

HEY, AND LOOK AFTER THAT MAN OF YOURS, EH, GIRL ?!

I TOLD YOU, IT'S NOT *LIKE* THAT!

BUT BEFORE YOU GO, WILL YOU HEAR ONE LAST REQUEST ?

A REQUEST...?

SH KSS

OH, MAN, THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A HOT BATH AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK!

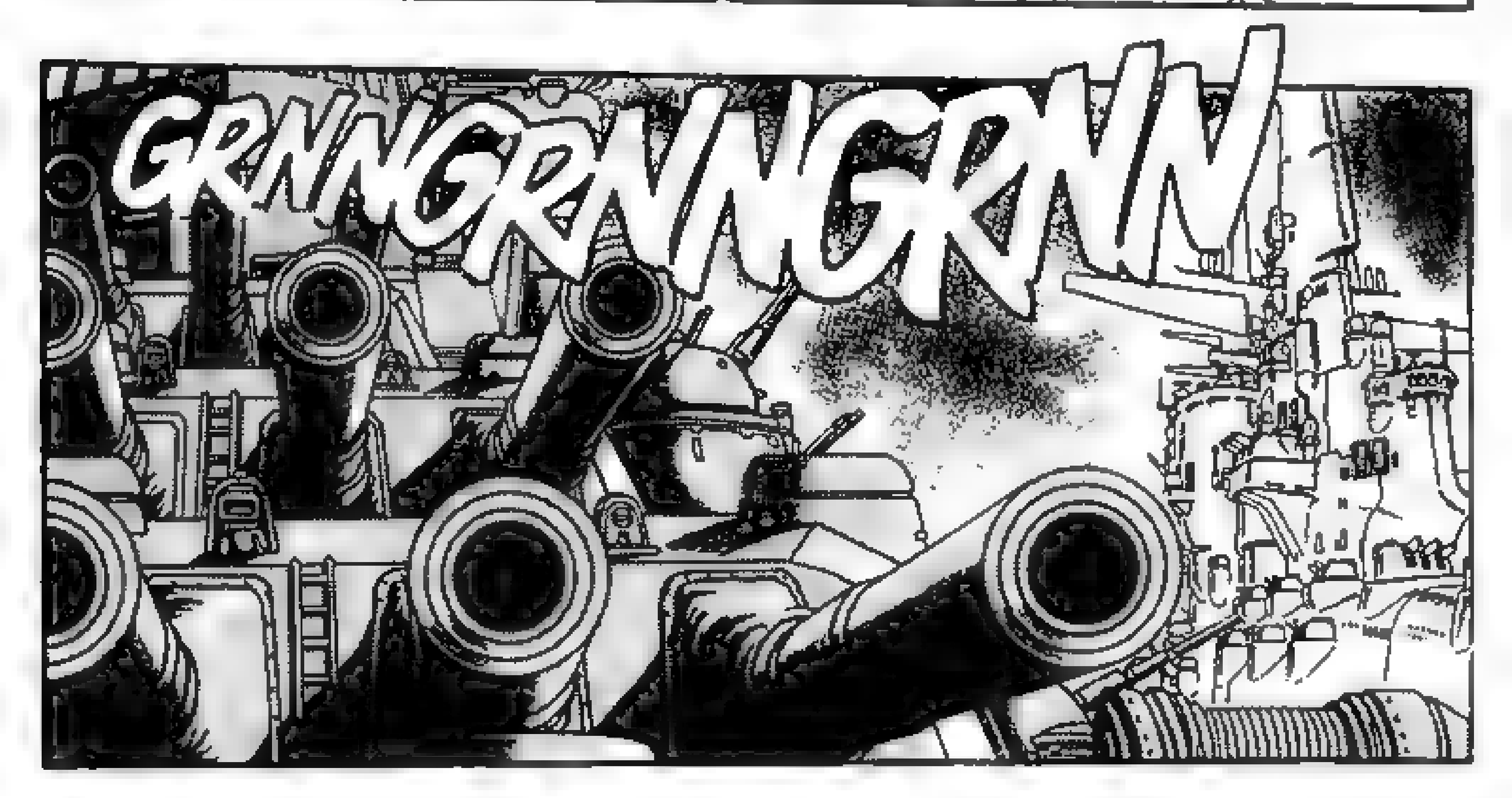
SHSSH

STILL, YOU KNOW, WITH ALL THESE HOT BABES AROUND...

THERE MUST BE *ONE* WHO WANTS TO SCRUB STUDBOY WATARU'S BACK...

OH, DEAR... HE'S AT IT AGAIN.

HEY, YOU! CALM DOWN!



TURRET A, READY TO FIRE!
STARBOARD MAGAZINE FEED, UP AND READY!
ALL STARBOARD GUNS, READY TO FIRE!
ENGINE ROOM NORMAL! SPEED, FORTY-TWO KNOTS!
TURRET C! WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE ?!
KHADA, THERE'S SOMETHING GROSS STUCK IN THE BARREL!
WHAT ?!

YOU IDIOT! GET OUTTA THERE !!

WE CAN'T FIRE !

HOW MUCH WILL YOU PAY ME?

YOU LITTLE BLOB! SHOVE HIM OUT!

HEAVE HO!!

HEY! WHOA! STOP! SHOW A LITTLE MERCY, LADIES !!

HEY, HEY! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE POKING THAT THING !!

OH, I GIVE UP! JUST LOAD A SHELL IN-- DEFUSE IT FIRST, THEN FIRE!

PORT GUNS, 80 DEGREES, ELEVATION 32 DEGREES, RANGE 2.5 MILES!

ALL GUNS, READY TO FIRE!

WE'LL TAKE OUT THEIR LEAD SHIP!

ENGINE ROOM, ALL AHEAD ONE HALF. RUDDER, COME TO PORT FIVE DEGREES!

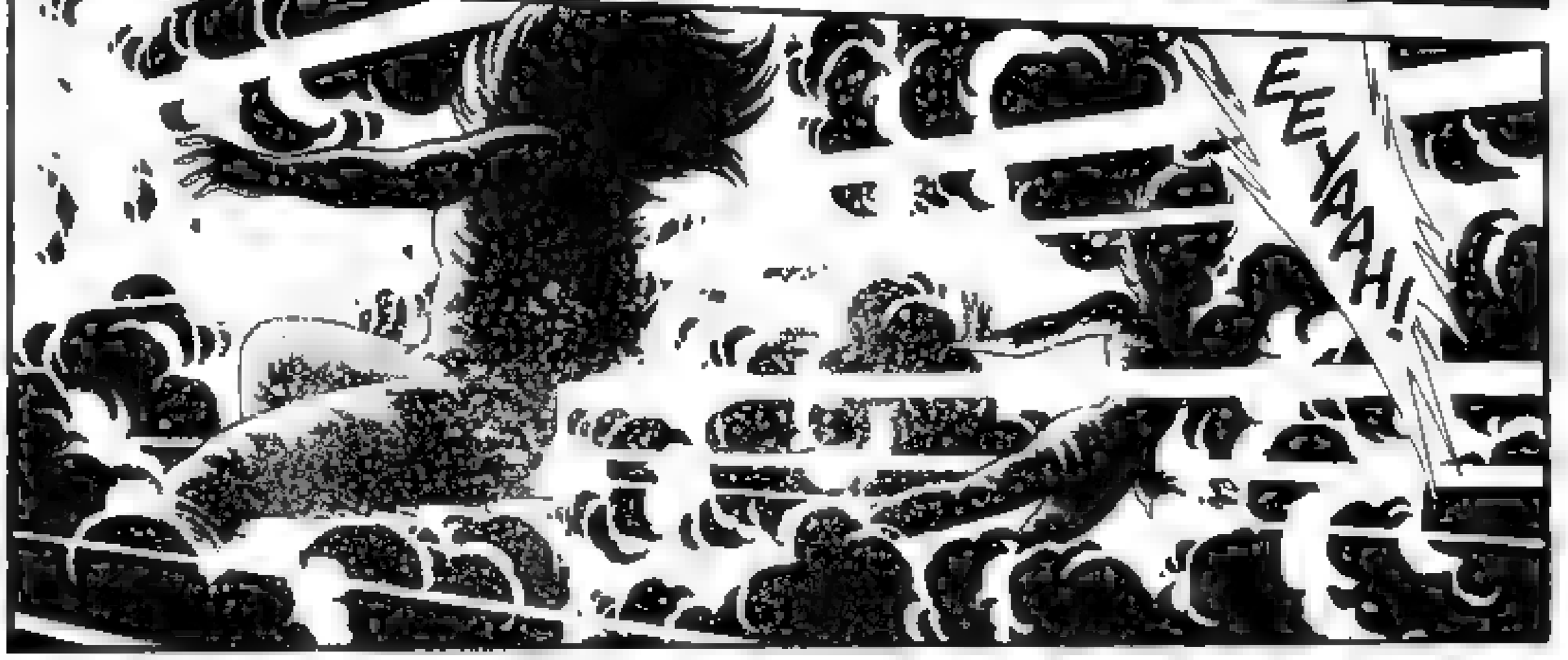
EASY, EASY, BABY...

FIRE!!

KRAKOOM!

WHEKOOM
WHEKKKM
DEAD ON, GIRLS! ALL GUNS, LOCK ON THEIR SECOND SHIP!
BZZZZZ
SMASHCOM

SHRAM!


EEYAAH!

WATARU!!

WATARU, WHERE ARE YOU ?!

ANSWER ME !!

MI-AAAN...

WATARU !

WHA- ?

YOU LITTLE FLASHER! YOU THINK I WANT TOO SEE THAT?!

OOPS...

HEY, IT'S NOT MY FAULT! I WAS TAKING A BATH, REMEMBER?!

SHUT UP, YOU PERVERT! PUT YOUR PANTS ON AND FOLLOW ME!

FOLLOW YOU? WHERE?!

THERE'S AN ESCAPE CAPSULE ON THE BOTTOM DECK!!

ESCAPE...?

THEN, WHAT ABOUT KHADA AND HER PALS?

.....

THEY'RE STAYING...

JUST WAIT ONE MINUTE! WE'RE GOING TO SNEAK OFF OUT THE BACK DOOR?!

THERE'S NO CHOICE! HURRY!

HEY! I KNOW YOU'RE ONE COLD BITCH, MIAN, BUT THIS IS TOO MUCH!!

I REFUSE TO--

KRAK

SORRY, WATARU...

THERE'S NO TIME TO EXPLAIN.

A SYMBOL ?

YOU HEARD ME. THE LIBERATION ARMY *NEEDS* SOMEONE LIKE YOU...

...AS A SYMBOL OF REBELLION!

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING! ME ?!

YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT ?!

HEY, I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO FIGHT FOR US.

I'M SAYING THAT JUST BY BEING OUT THERE, YOU GIVE US COURAGE!

THE MOST WANTED CRIMINAL IN THE EMPIRE, HEADING STRAIGHT FOR KYURAWEIL KEEP.

EVERYONE'S ROOTING FOR YOU!

NEVER SAW IT THAT WAY...

HEY, IT'S PROBABLY A PAIN IN THE ASS, FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED...

BUT WE'VE COME THIS FAR. I DON'T WANT THIS BATTLE TO STAMP OUT THE FIRES OF REVOLUTION!

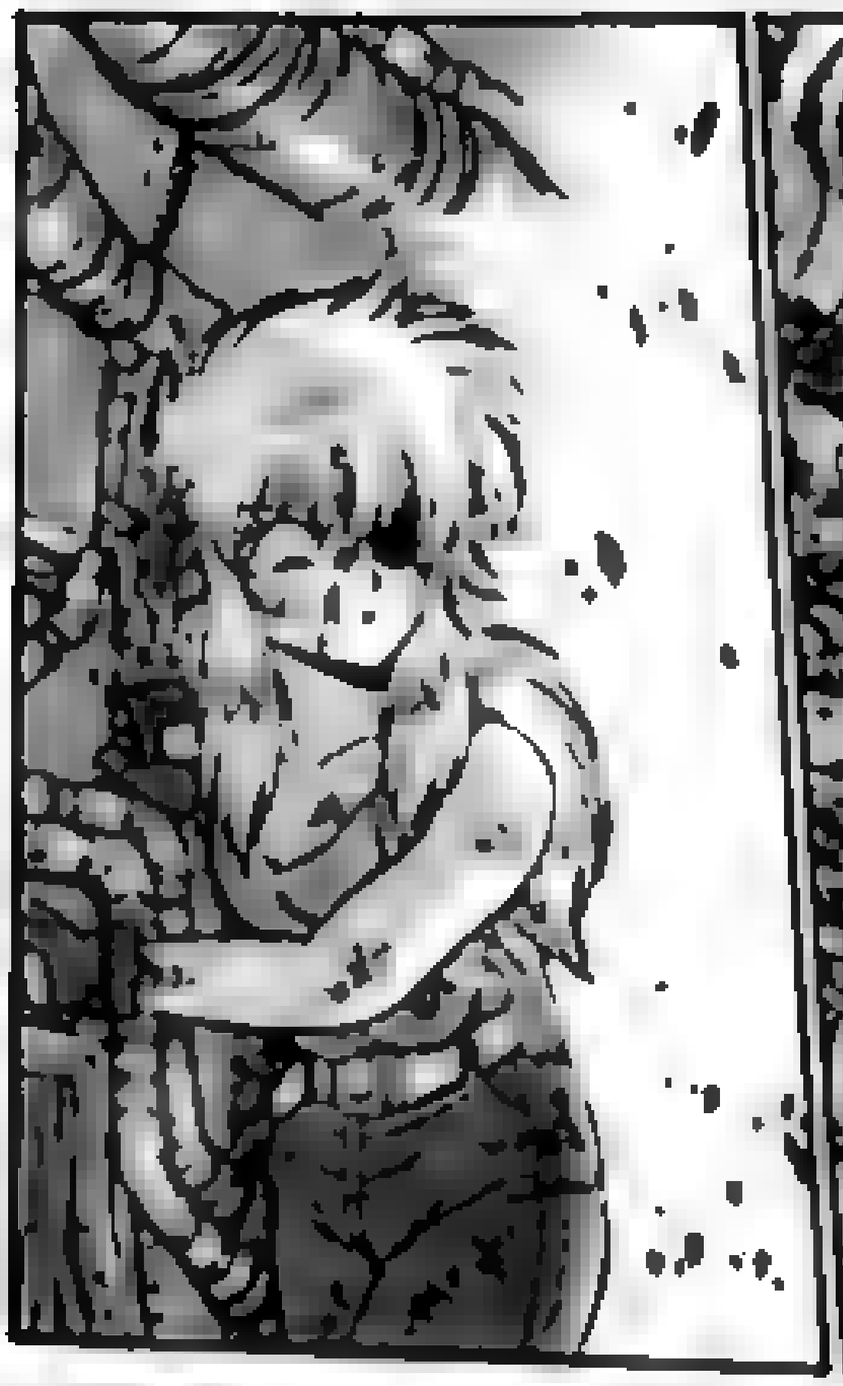
"WE'RE ALL COUNTING ON YOU, GIRL!!"

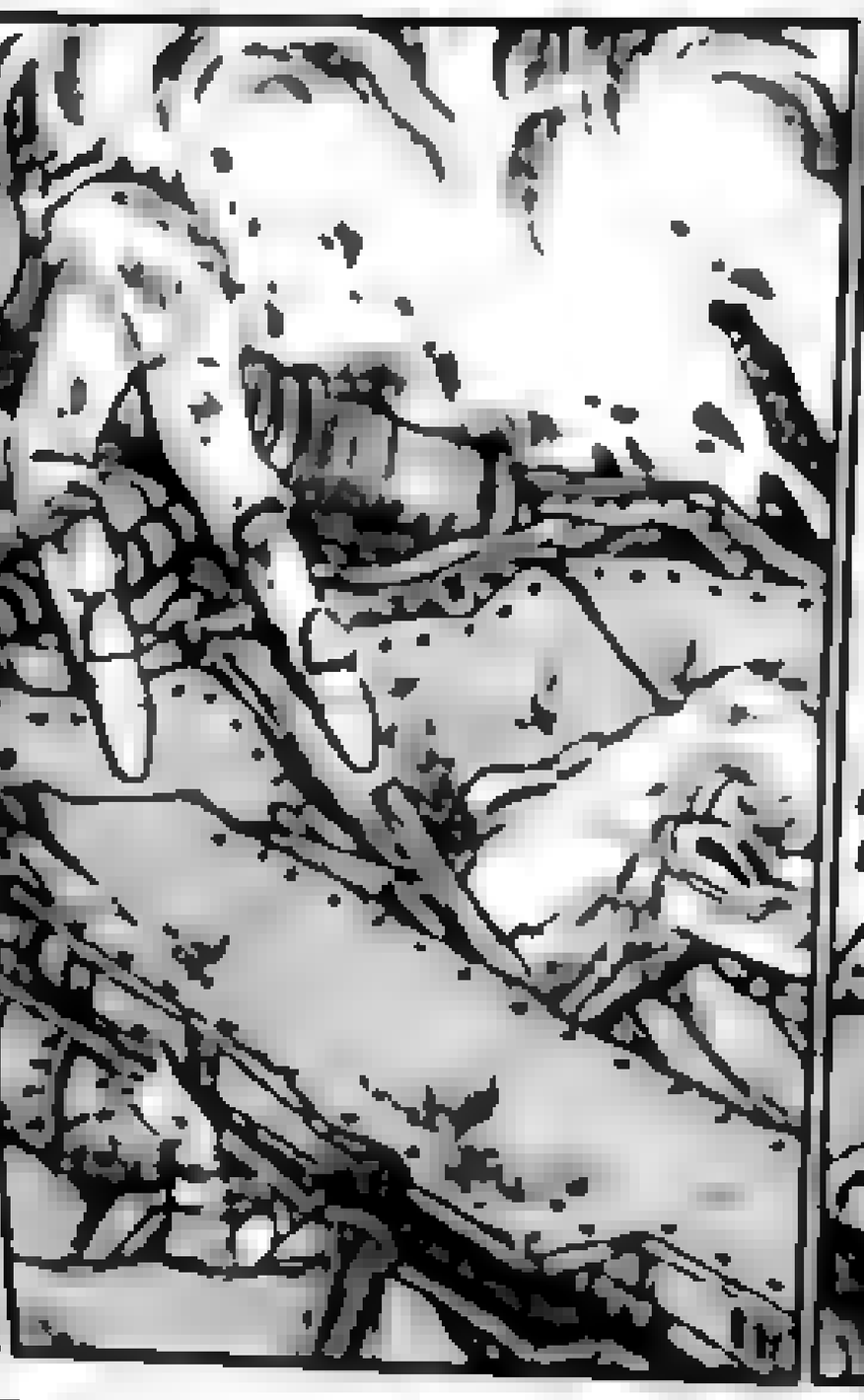
KHADA..!!

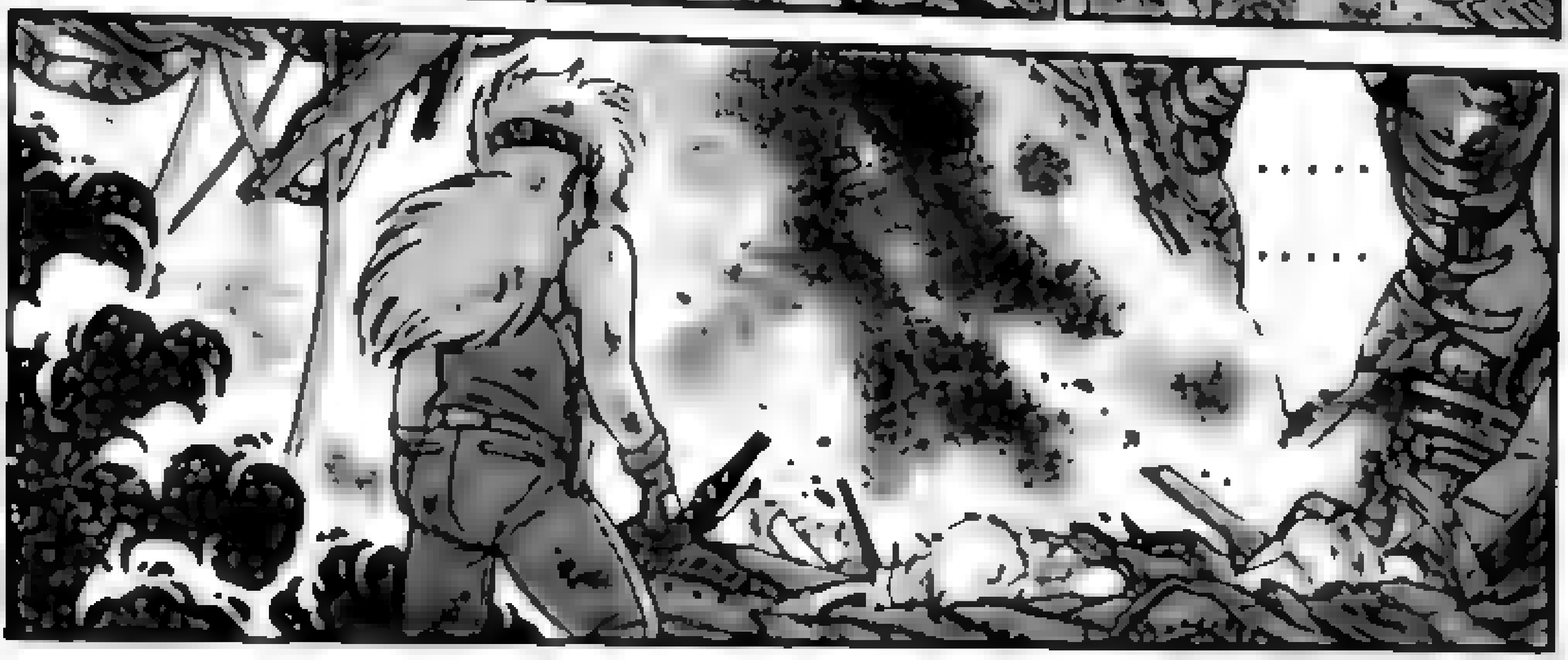
BOOM

HNGG

SHANGG

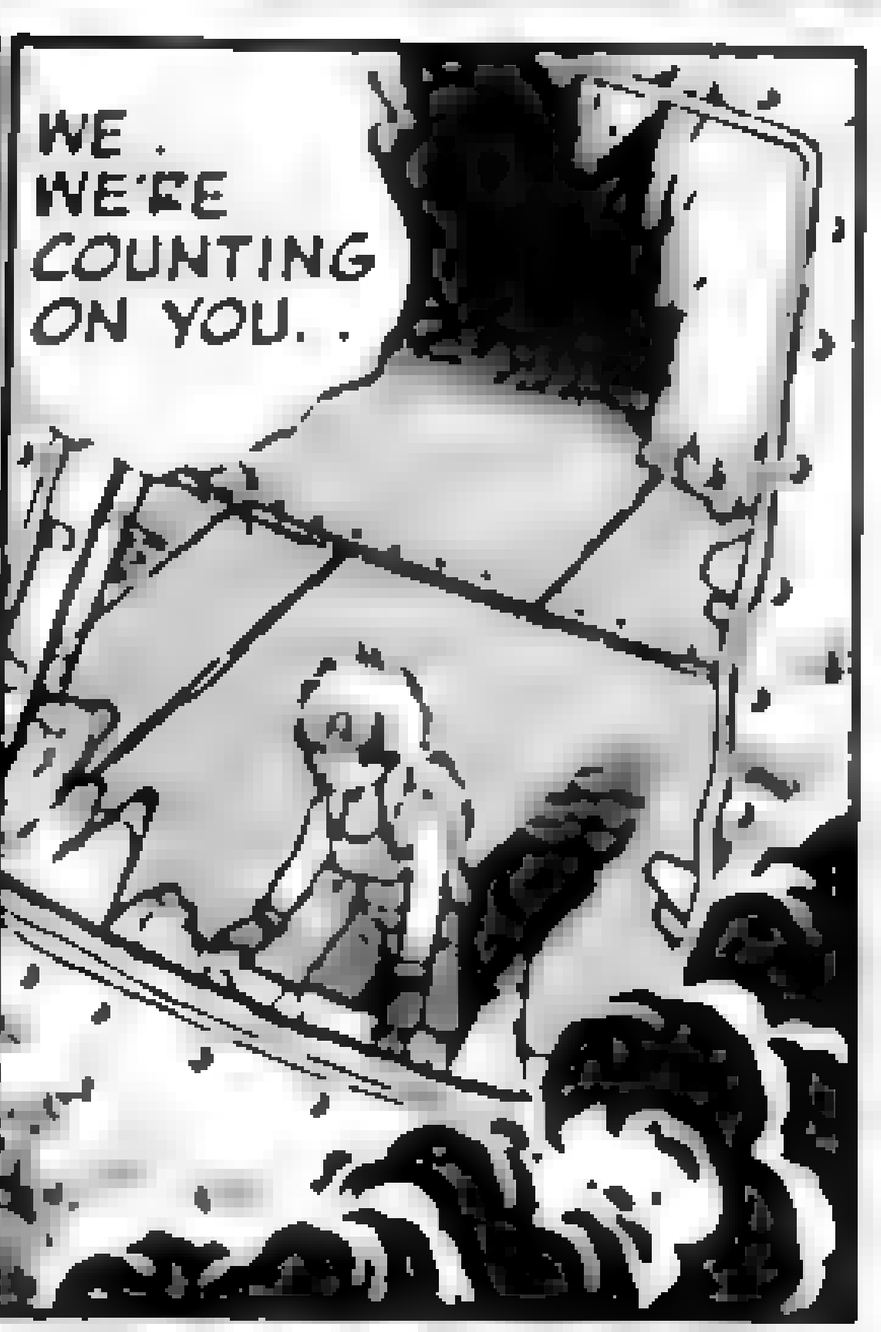


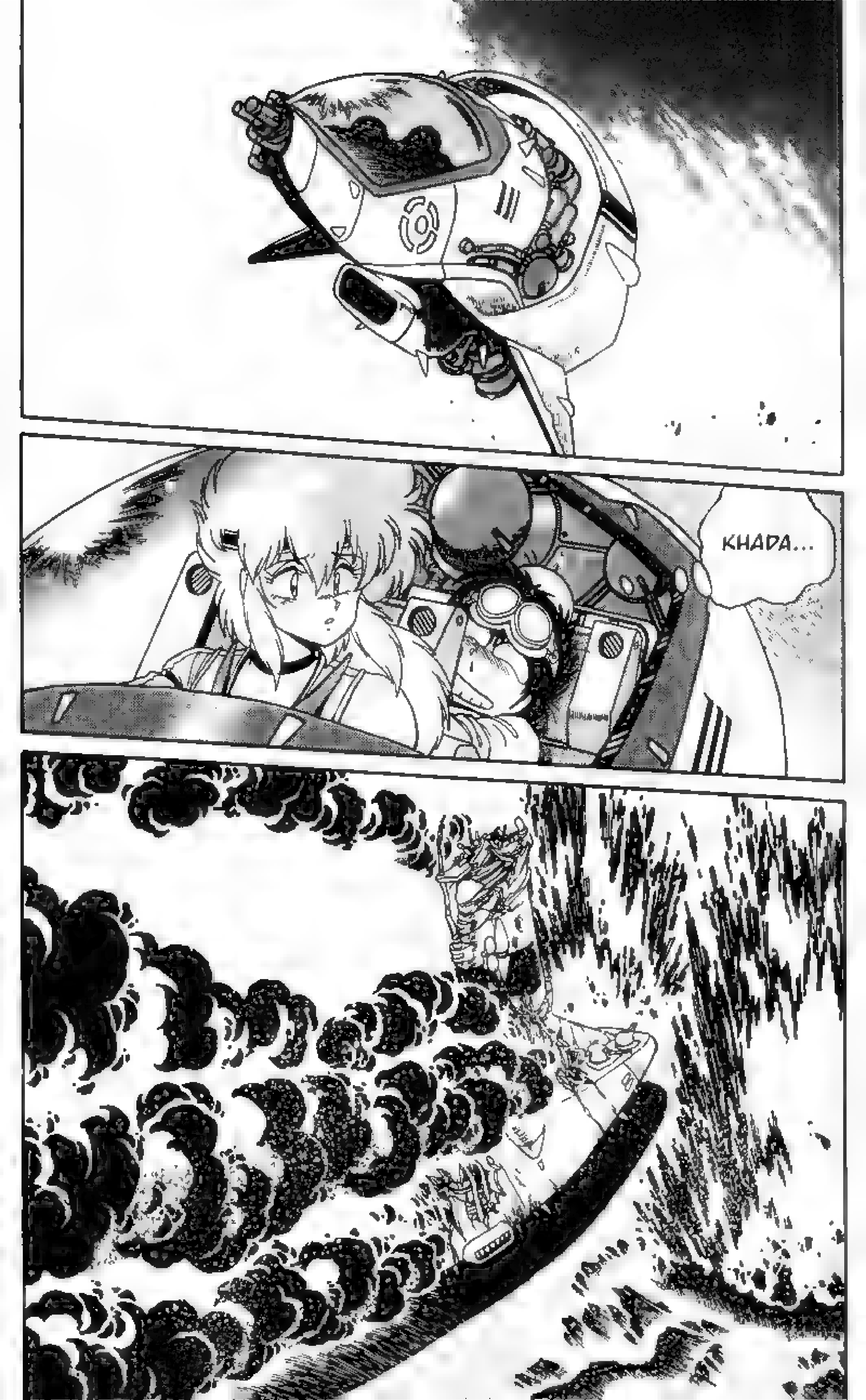


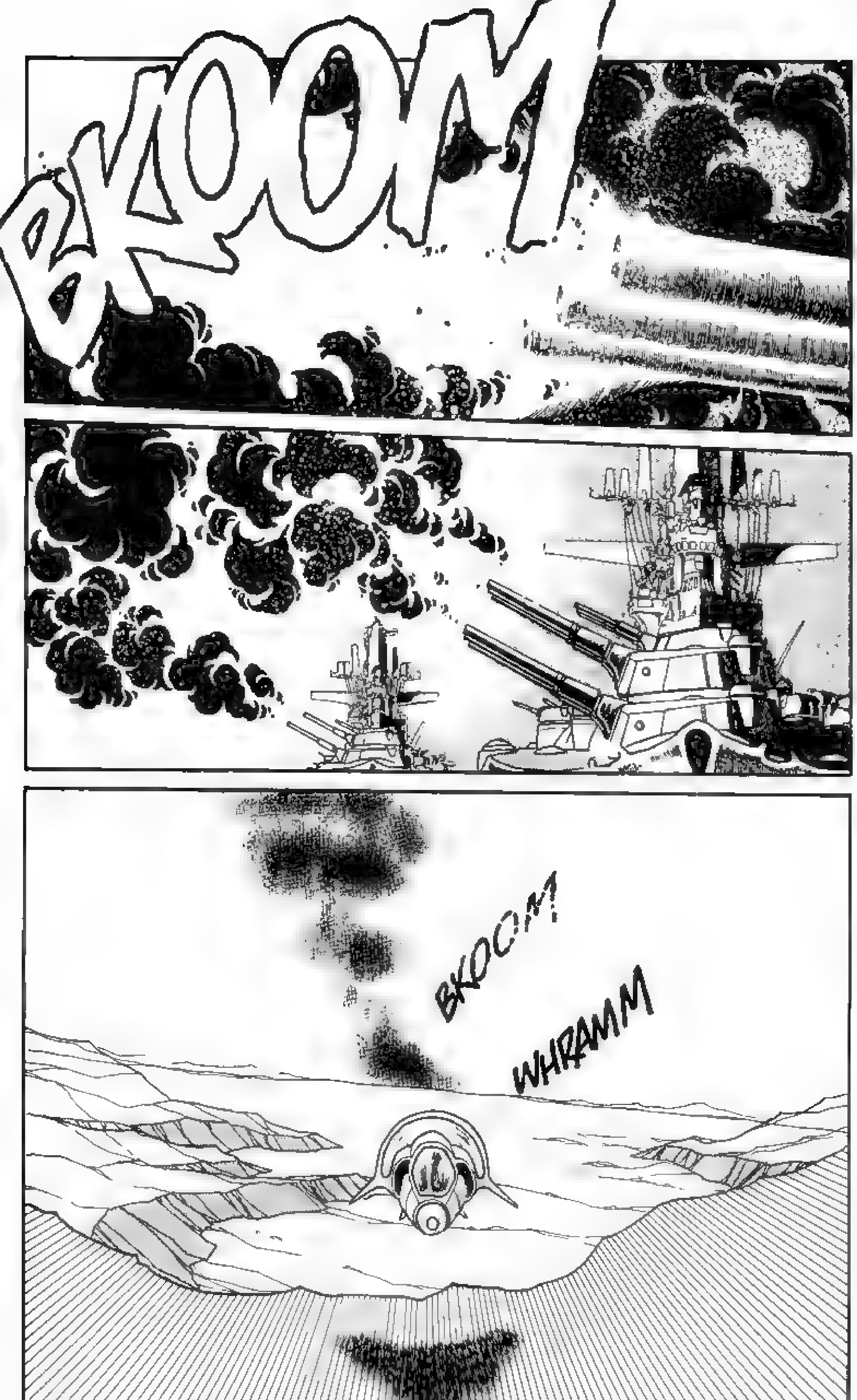

.....
.....

HOOSH

MIAN.. !


WE.. WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU..


KHADA...


BOOM!
BKDCM!
WHRAMM

DAMMIT, MIAN !!

I DON'T CARE *WHAT* THE REASONS WERE! YOU TURNED YOUR BACK ON KHADA AND HER FRIENDS! YOU *ABANDONED* THEM!

GOD-*DAMN* IT, ARE YOU LISTENING?! SAY SOMETHING!!

SHIT... I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SUCH A LOUSY, COLD-HEARTED--

YOU *SHUT UP* !!

WHAK

DO YOU HAVE *ANY* IDEA WHAT I'M THINKING?! HOW I FEEL?!

KRAK WHUD WHOK

OWW, OWW, OWW !!

THAT NIGHT, MIAN CRIED FOR HOURS...

IT... IT WAS A MIAN I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE...

SO YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION...

HEY, DID YOU HEAR? MIAN TORIS IS SOMEWHERE HERE IN KAWACHI!

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY. WELL, WE'RE ON THE ROAD TO KYURAWEIL KEEP, RIGHT?

THAT REBEL ARMY, THEY SAY THEY'RE GONE. WIPED OUT!

WHADDYA EXPECT, HUH? NO WAY THEY COULD WIN.

I HEAR THAT MIAN TORIS WAS WORKING WITH THE REBELS.

MAN, WHY'D A BABE LIKE THAT WANT TO GO TO KYURAWEIL KEEP, THAT'S WHAT I WANNA KNOW.

HEY..

IF YOU ASK ME, SHE'S GOING TO WHACK THAT BITCH SHION.

HAW HAW! WAY TO GO, MIAN!

YOU THERE!

?

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANTED TO SAY THAT?

TIME FOR A LITTLE CHAT, GUYS.

OH, GOD.. THE COPS...

WE WERE J-JUST MAKIN' A LITTLE JOKE, OFFICERS...

NO, PLEASE... DON'T!

KRASH

HAIL, S-SHION! LONG LIVE THE EMPRESS!!

THE REBEL INSURGENCY HAS HAD NO DISCERNIBLE EFFECT ON SOCIAL COHESION WITHIN THE EMPIRE.

BUT THAT WAS ONLY BECAUSE WE GAVE THEM NO TIME TO FAN A GENERAL REVOLT.

THE PROBLEM IS *MIAN TORIS!*

MANY CITIZENS SEEM TO BE PLACING ALL THEIR HOPE IN HER.

AND THOSE HOPES KEEP *RISING* THE CLOSER SHE GETS TO KYURAWEIL KEEP!

I AGREE COMPLETELY, *GENERAL MANSTEIN.*

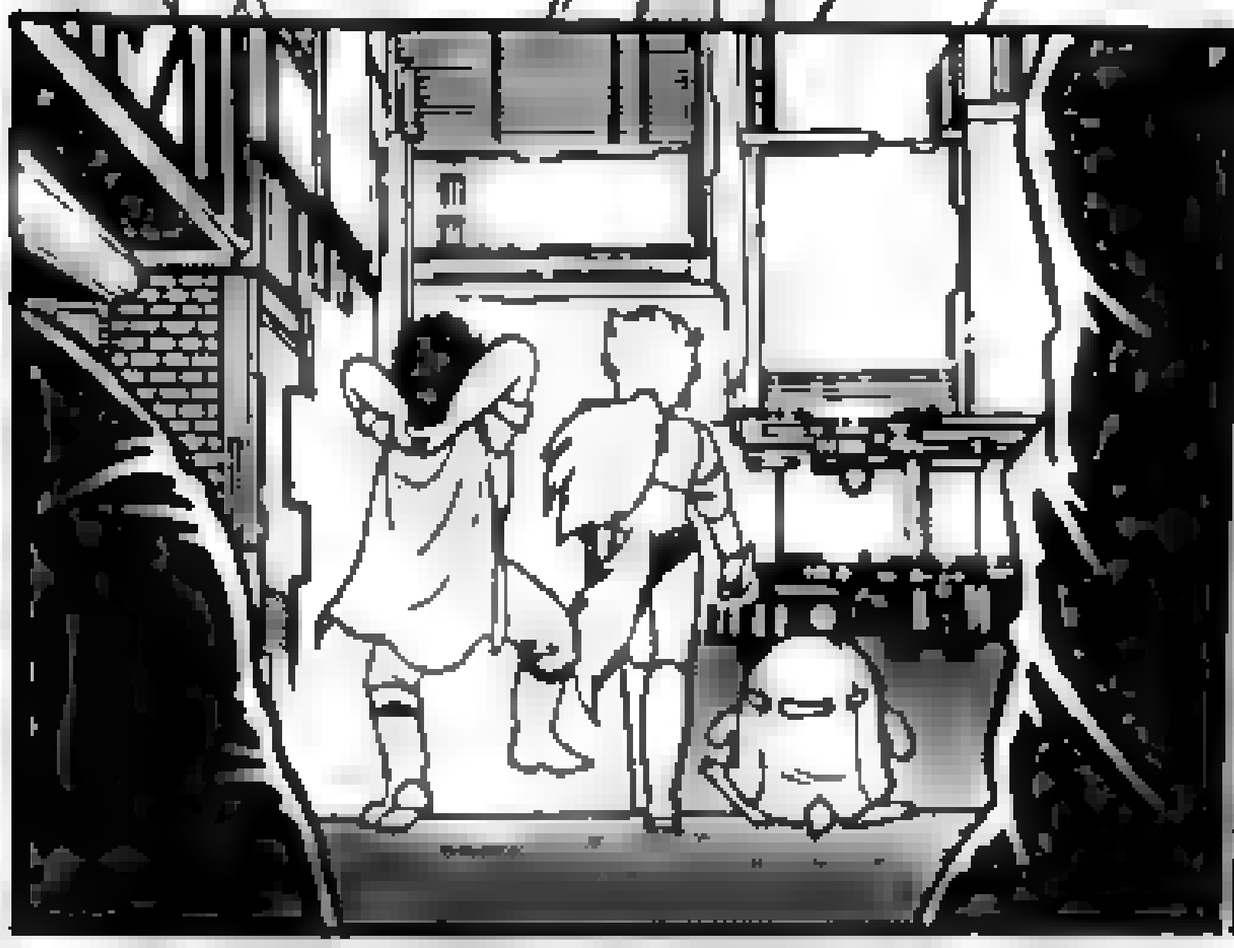
WE'RE ALREADY ROOTING OUT DISSIDENT ELEMENTS.

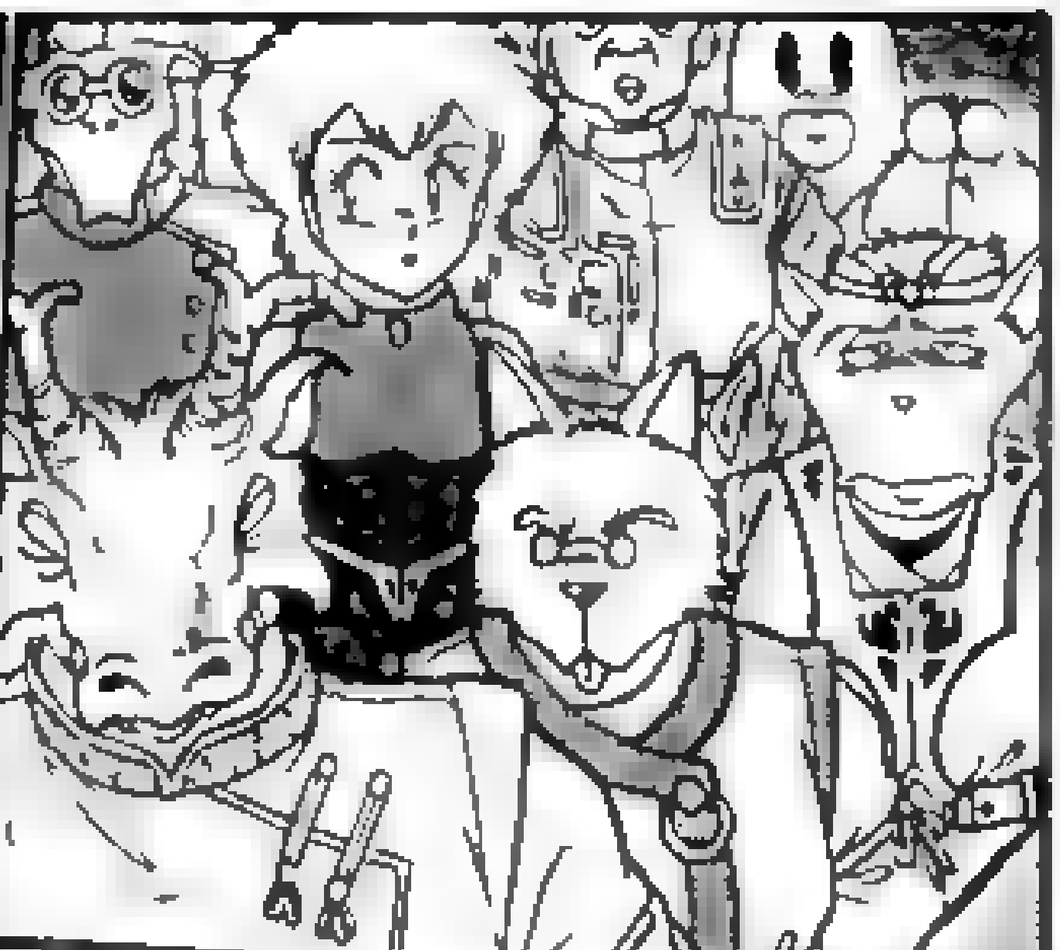
I'VE ORDERED THE OCCUPATION GARRISON REINFORCED.

HMM...
SO OUR EMPRESS HAS A WEAKNESS FOR MIAN TORIS...
BUT I, FIELD GENERAL MANSTEIN, DO NOT!
SIGHHH
WHAT'S COME OVER YOU? WE'RE PRACTICALLY THERE, YOU KNOW.
I KNOW, I KNOW. BUT TAXES THIS YEAR, OH MAN..
SURE, I LOVE BEING A MONEY-GRUBBING SLEAZE BALL, BUT SOMETIMES I ASK MYSELF--BABO, IS THIS WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT?
SIGHH
I WASN'T ASKING YOU !!
IS IT KHADA, MIAN? IS THAT IT?
IT'S NOTHING. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME

BUT IT IS SOMETHING. IS AWFUL BURDEN...

ME A SYMBOL, KHADA? IF YOU ONLY KNEW WHAT I'LL DO AT KYURAWEIL KEEP...





WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?!
W-WE JUST... ARE YOU...
ARE YOU MIAN TORIS?! THE REAL MIAN TORIS?!

YEAH SO WHAT?
WAHOO!
DID YOU HEAR THAT?! IT'S HER! THE REAL MIAN!!

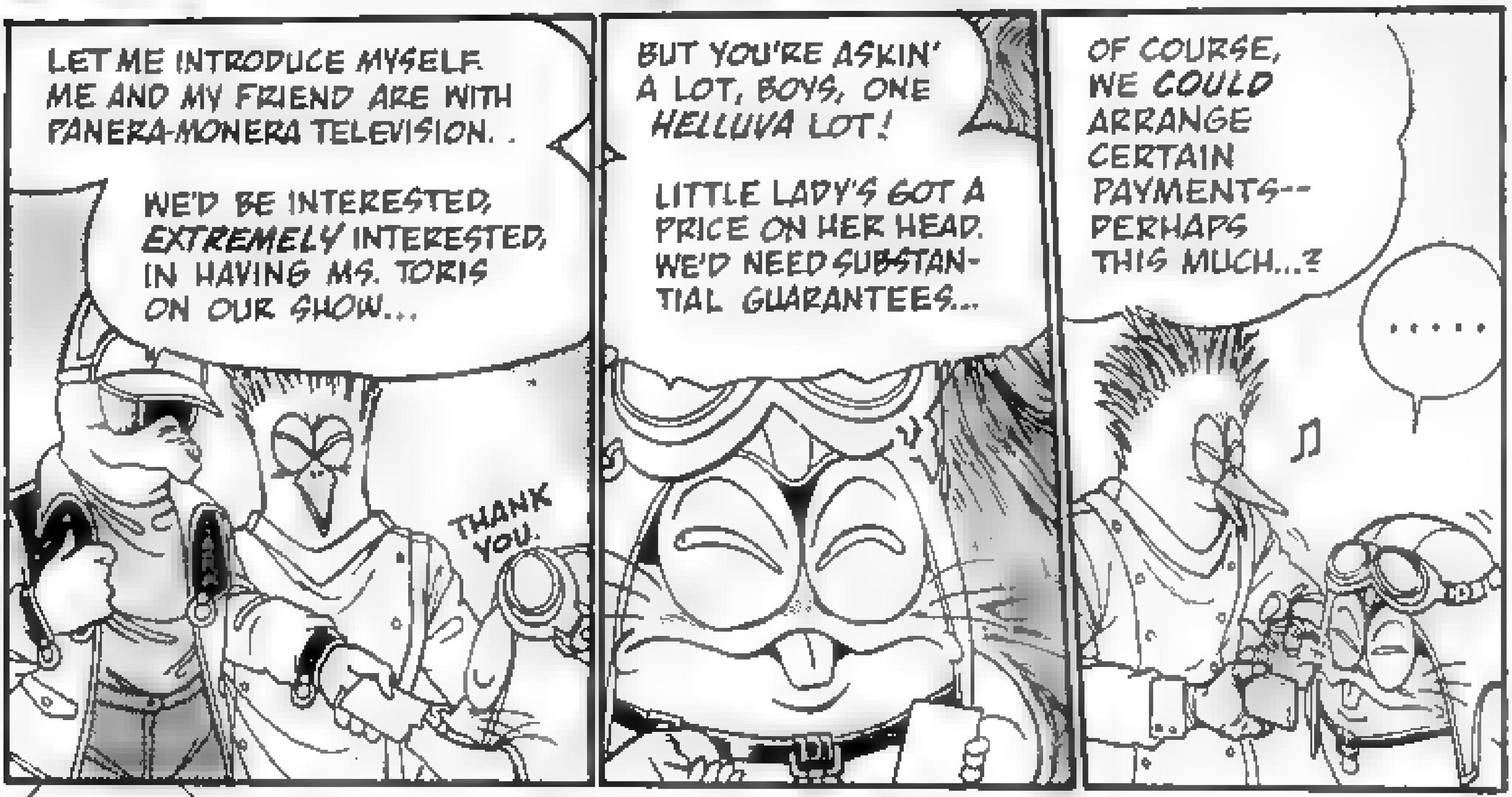
WE'RE ALL BEHIND YOU, MIAN!
GO MIAN GO! OUR HERO!
NOW JUST WAIT ONE MINUTE HERE! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN?!

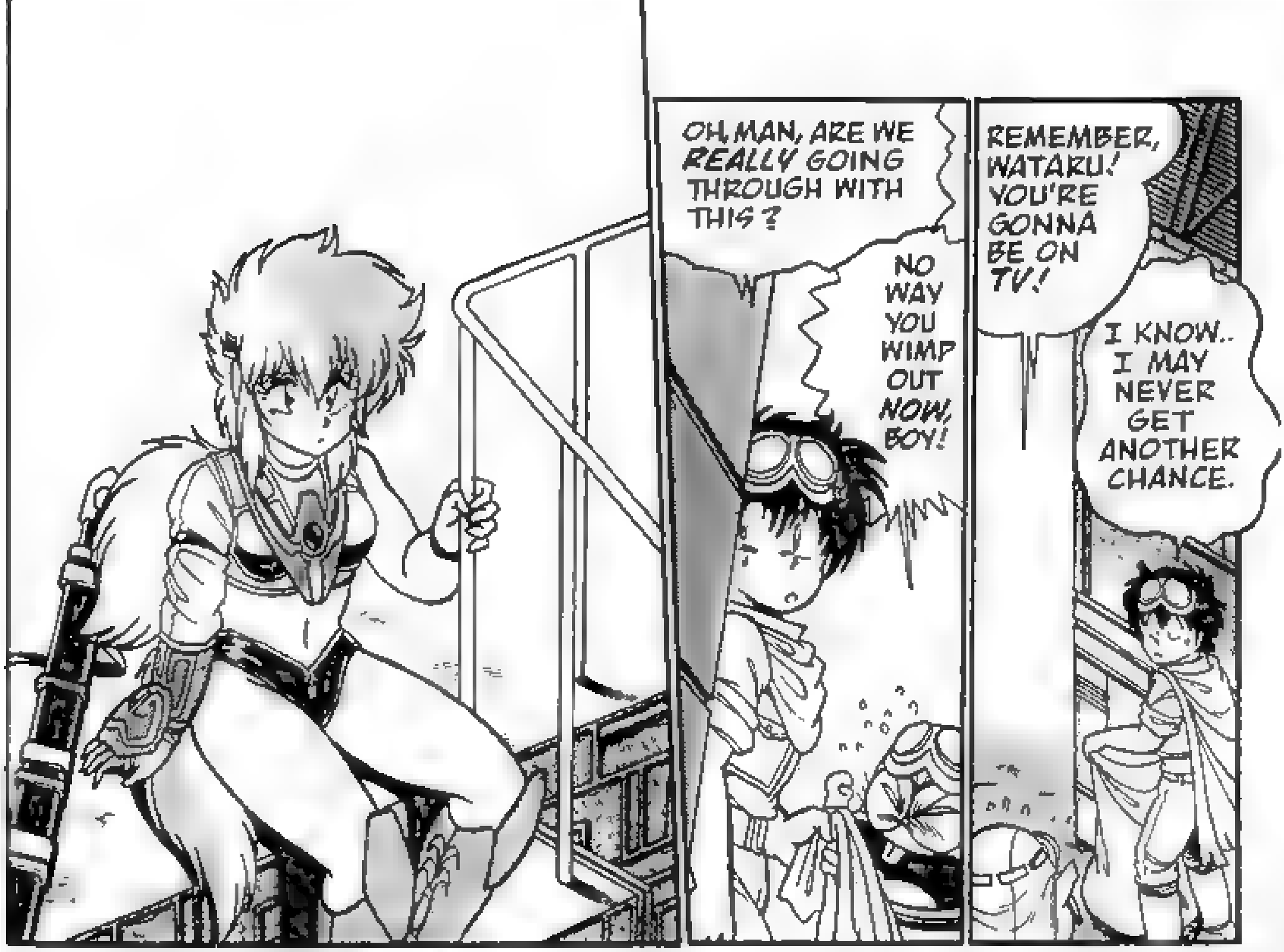
YOU'RE GOING TO KYURAWEIL KEEP, RIGHT?
YOU'RE OUR HOPE! OUR SHINING STAR!
THE HELL I AM!!
I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS!
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

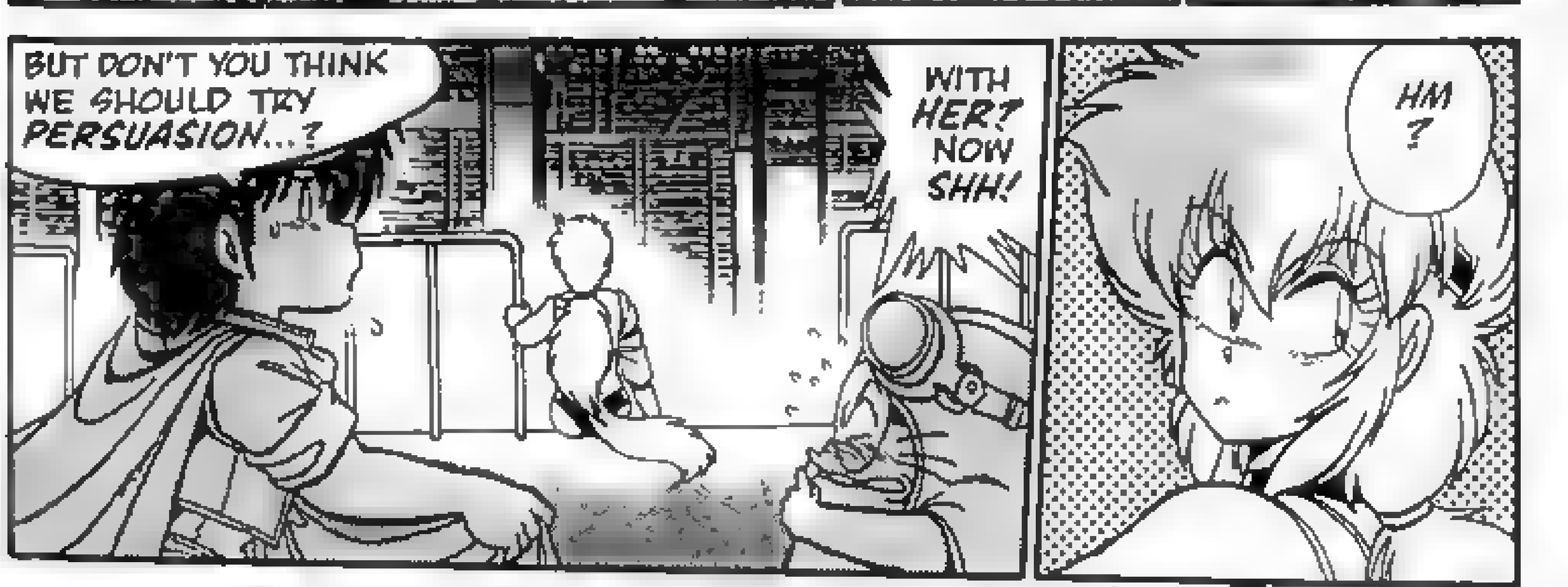
WATARU, WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
B-BUT MIAN!
MIAN TORIS! OH, PLEASE WAIT FOR US, MIAN!
TELL US WHAT TO DO! MIANNN!
WELL, IF THAT DON'T BEAT ALL.
IT'S QUEER WHAT FOLK'LL WASTE THEIR ENERGY ON, AND NOT A D.D. IN IT FOR ANYONE.
AROUND HERE, YOU SAY?!
YEAH, BUT I DON'T SEE HER NOW.
I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S JUST ANOTHER DAMNED RUMOR.
SINCE WHEN DO WANTED CRIMINALS STROLL DOWN MAIN STREET?
YEAH. BUT IT'S A ROTTEN SHAME. OUR RATINGS'D GO THROUGH THE ROOF.
WE GET THAT BABE ON THE SHOW, WE CLEAR A 50 SHARE EASY.
IF WE COULD EVEN TALK HER INTO IT...
AH, YOU GENTS OVER THERE...HOLD ON ONE GOLD-PLATED SECOND!

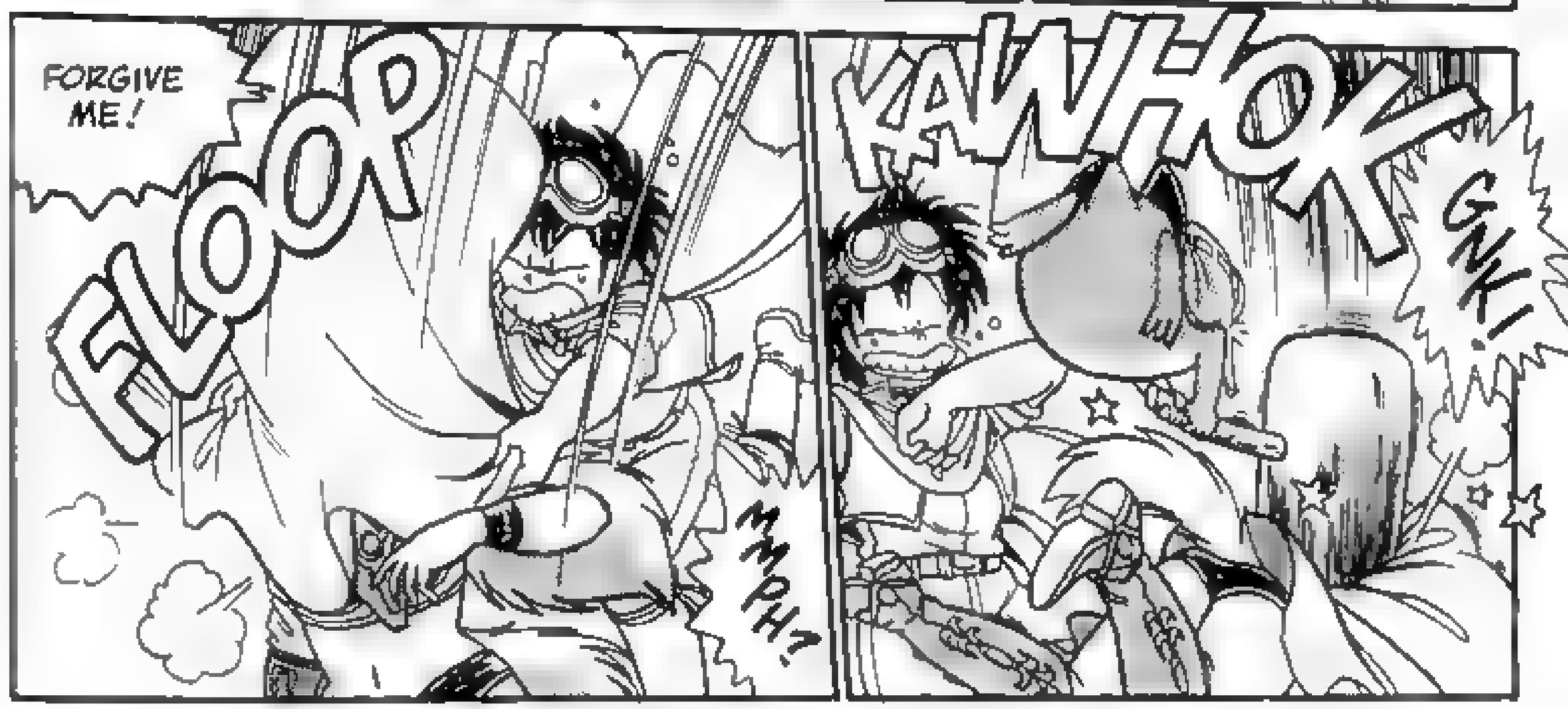
TALK LIKE THAT HAS TO GO THROUGH HER MANAGER. AND THAT'S *ME*, BABO, SEE?!

THERE'S A RIGHT WAY AND A WRONG WAY, GENTS. FOR *EVERYTHING*.



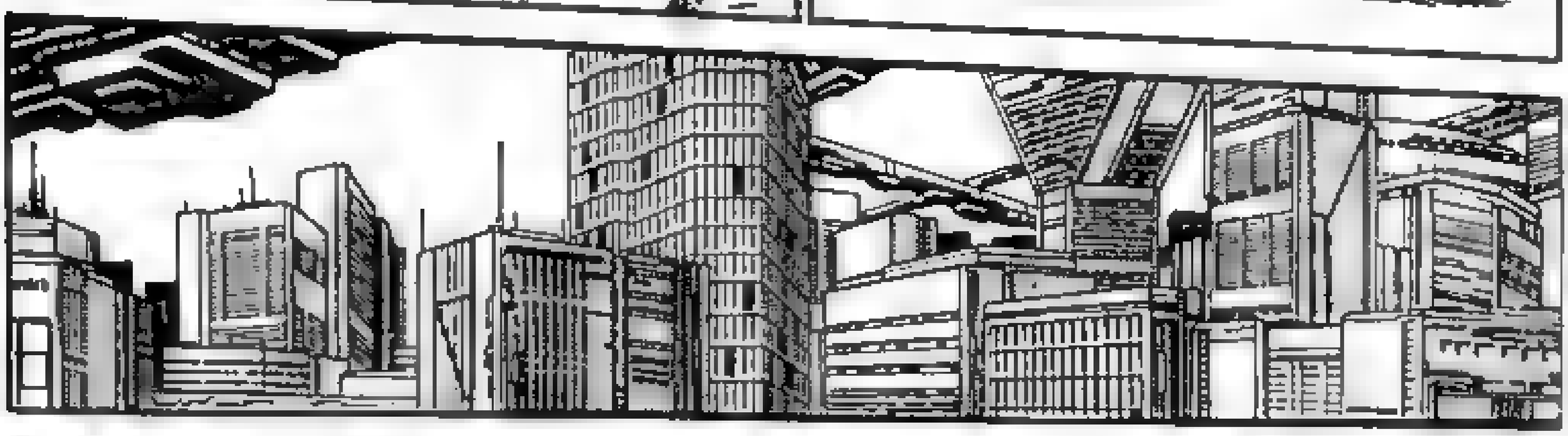

OH, MAN, ARE WE REALLY GOING THROUGH WITH THIS?
NO WAY YOU WIMP OUT NOW, BOY!
REMEMBER, WATARU! YOU'RE GONNA BE ON TV!
I KNOW.. I MAY NEVER GET ANOTHER CHANCE.


BUT DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD TRY PERSUASION...?
WITH HER? NOW SHH!
HM?


FORGIVE ME!
FLOOP
MMPH!
WHOOSH
GNK!

YOU-- ARE YOU CRAZY ?!?!?
HEY, DON'T SWEAT IT! SHE'S BUILT TO LAST.

I SEE NUTTINK, I KNOW NUTTINK!
FEETS DON'T FAIL US NOW!



ABSOLUTELY NOT!

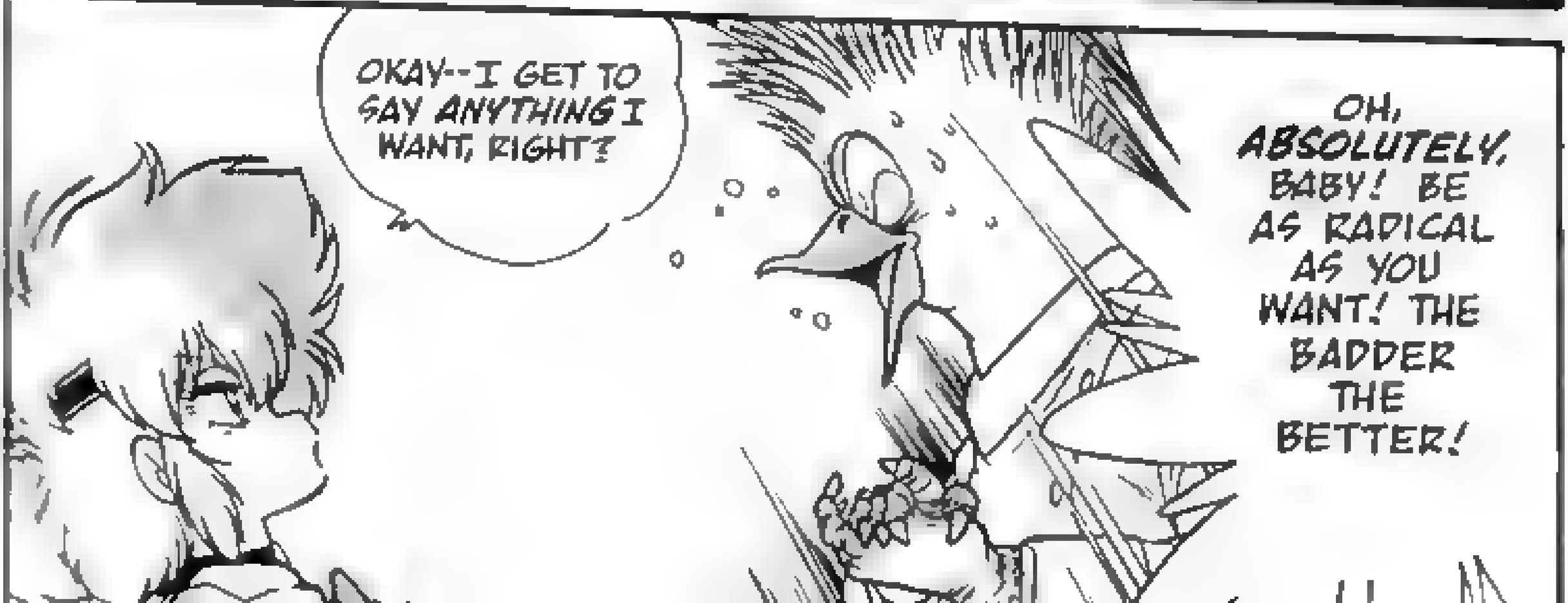
NO WAY AM I GOING ON TELEVISION.
PLEASE, PLEASE RECONSIDER, MS. TORIS! I PROMISE WE'LL TREAT YOU RIGHT.

DO YOU GUYS KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING? DO YOU REALLY THINK THE EMPIRE'LL SIT BY WITH ME ON THE AIR?

WE UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY, COMPLETELY. OUR STATION'S ANTI-EMPIRE POLICY PAYS OFF BIG TIME IN THE RATINGS DEPARTMENT.
WE'VE GOT THE FIRM SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC...

WHY, JUST LAST WEEK WE INTERVIEWED THAT SUPER ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT SINGER, LIM SWEET. THE AUDIENCE LOVED HER! AND THE EMPIRE DIDN'T LIFT A FINGER...
AND DON'T FORGET TO BUY MY NEW ALBUM, "ALTERED SWEET"!
LIM, YOU GOT NO SHAME.

.....


OKAY--I GET TO SAY ANYTHING I WANT, RIGHT?
OH, ABSOLUTELY, BABY! BE AS RADICAL AS YOU WANT! THE BADDER THE BETTER!

GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE, AND WELCOME TO PANERA-MONERA! TODAY WE'RE EXTENDING OUR BROADCAST FOR A ONE-HOUR SPECIAL PROGRAM.

OUR TOPIC TONIGHT, "MY WAR ON THE EMPIRE."

AND NOW LET'S MEET TONIGHT'S VERY SPECIAL GUEST!

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR... MIAN TORIS!!

Pew...

WELCOME TO OUR STUDIO, MS. TORIS.
AS ALL OF YOU KNOW, MS. TORIS IS THE EMPIRE'S MOST-WANTED CRIMINAL!
COUNTLESS TIMES SHE HAS BEEN TRAPPED BY THE EMPIRE, AND ALWAYS BROKEN FREE TO FIGHT AGAIN!
HER JOURNEY HAS BEEN A BLOOD-STIRRING, BLOOD-SPILLING ODYSSEY!!
SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, LET'S INTRODUCE THE TOUGH LITTLE LADY HERSELF!

BUT FIRST, PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOUR TWO COMPANIONS...?

WHAT, THOSE TWO ?

YO, I'M MIAN'S MANAGER, BABO, THAT'S B-A-B-O. SEND CASH, 1-900-555-BABO! THIS IS MY SECRETARY, WATARU--

THE HELL I AM !!

ACTUALLY, THEY'RE JUST A COUPLE OF WITLESS MINIONS.

WHAAAT-?!

MS. TORIS, YOU'RE THE MOST-WANTED WOMAN IN THE WORLD.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ALL THAT ATTENTION?

HEY, I DIDN'T ASK THOSE EMPIRE GOON SQUADS TO CHASE ME.

GUESS THEY JUST DON'T LIKE WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO

FOR EXAMPLE ?!

LIKE, MAYBE THEY DON'T LIKE MY GOING TO KYURAWEIL KEEP.

GOOD LORD! YOU MEAN THE RUMORS ARE TRUE?! YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO KYURAWEIL KEEP?!

AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU GET THERE, MS. TORIS ?!

HEY, TUNE IN NEXT WEEK AND FIND OUT

WAY TO GO, BABE, WAY TO GO!!

THE RATINGS ARE GONNA GO THROUGH THE ROOF.

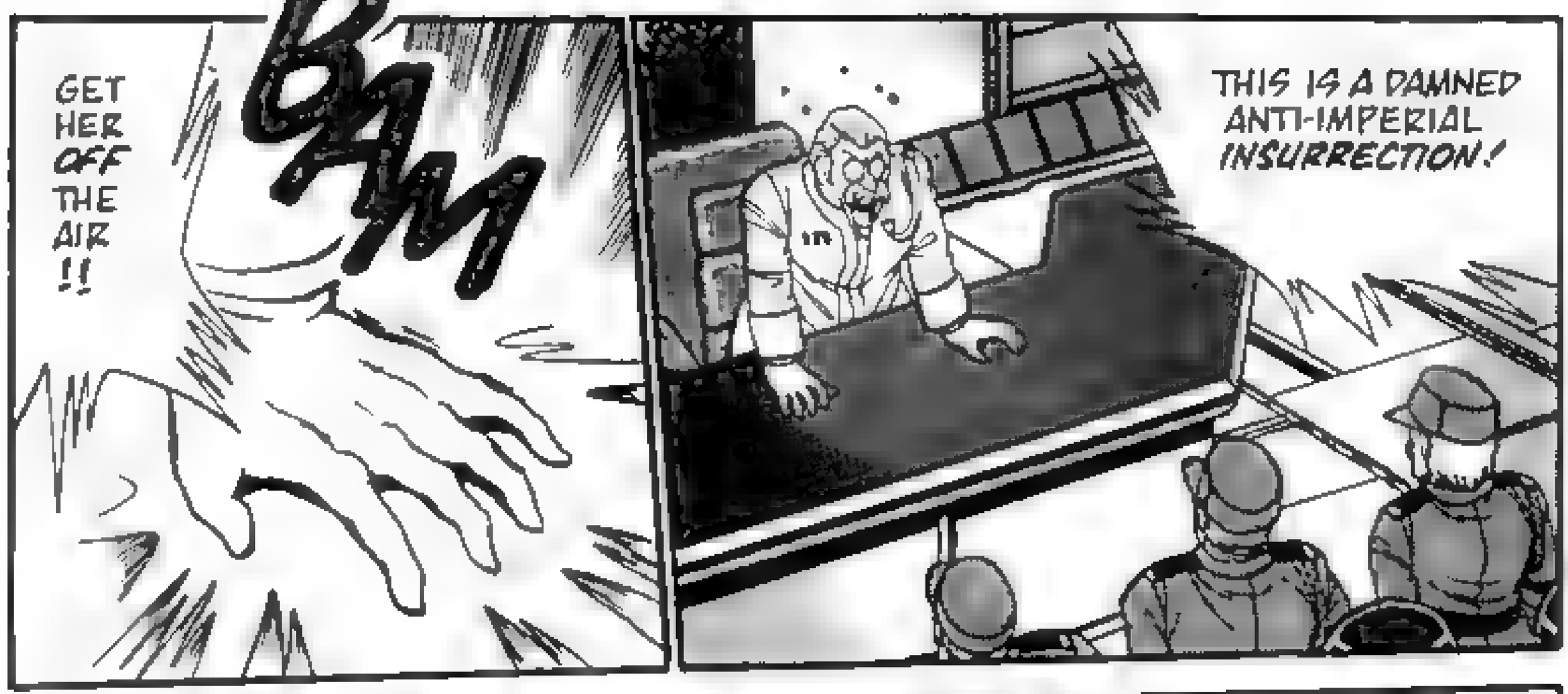
C'MON, SPOCKO-- ASK SOME REAL QUESTIONS!

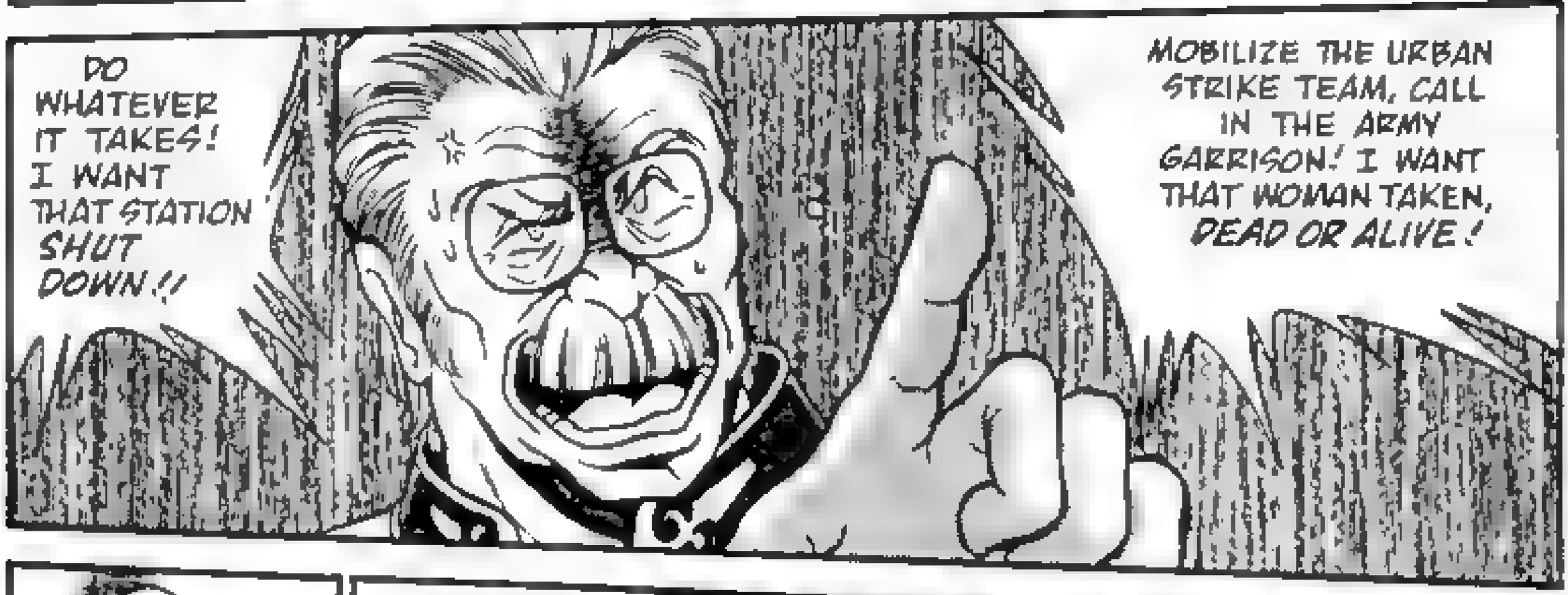
THAT'S THE SORT OF ANSWER WE LIKE TO HEAR, MS TORIS!

NOW, LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS. YOU AND THE REBEL ARMY--

ME AND THE REBELS? STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT, YOU KNOW.

THEY WERE JUST GOING MY WAY, SEE? NOTHING MORE.


GET HER OFF THE AIR !!
BAM
THIS IS A DAMNED ANTI-IMPERIAL INSURRECTION!


DO WHATEVER IT TAKES! I WANT THAT STATION SHUT DOWN!!
MOBILIZE THE URBAN STRIKE TEAM, CALL IN THE ARMY GARRISON! I WANT THAT WOMAN TAKEN, DEAD OR ALIVE!

WELL, WELL..
I JUST WANT TO SAY, ON BEHALF OF ALL OUR VIEWERS TODAY, THAT WE ARE COUNTING ON YOU TO DO YOUR BEST AT KYURAWEIL KEEP.
HUH ?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ?
WELL, ER...I MEAN, NOW THAT THE REBEL ARMY HAS BEEN WIPED OUT...
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON LEFT WE CAN COUNT ON!
HEH HEH HEH?

EEK!

YOU LITTLE CREEP!
IT'S NOT... IT--IT'S EVERYONE, MS. TORIS, WE'RE ALL ROOTING--

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!!
GO AHEAD AND PULP HIM, SWEET THANG. THE RATINGS ARE FLYING!

B-B-BUT YOU'RE-- YOU'RE OUR SYMBOL OF REBELLION, OUR H-HOPE...!
YOU'RE OUT THERE F-FIGHTING FOR US!
I'M FIGHTING FOR WHO?!

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!!
WHAP

MIAN! CALM DOWN, WILLYA?!
LET GO OF ME, WATARU!

I'VE GOT ONE THING I'VE GOT TO SAY.

NOW LISTEN UP, ALL YOU BLOCKHEADS WATCHING THIS SHOW!

WHAT KIND OF WHINING, SNIVELLING BABIES *ARE* YOU, ANYWAY?!

SO YOU'RE WAITING FOR ME OR SOME REBEL ARMY TO SAVE YOUR LOUSY BUTTS? IT'S NOT THAT EASY, SWEETHEARTS!

STOP WAITING FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK! STOP IT *RIGHT NOW*!

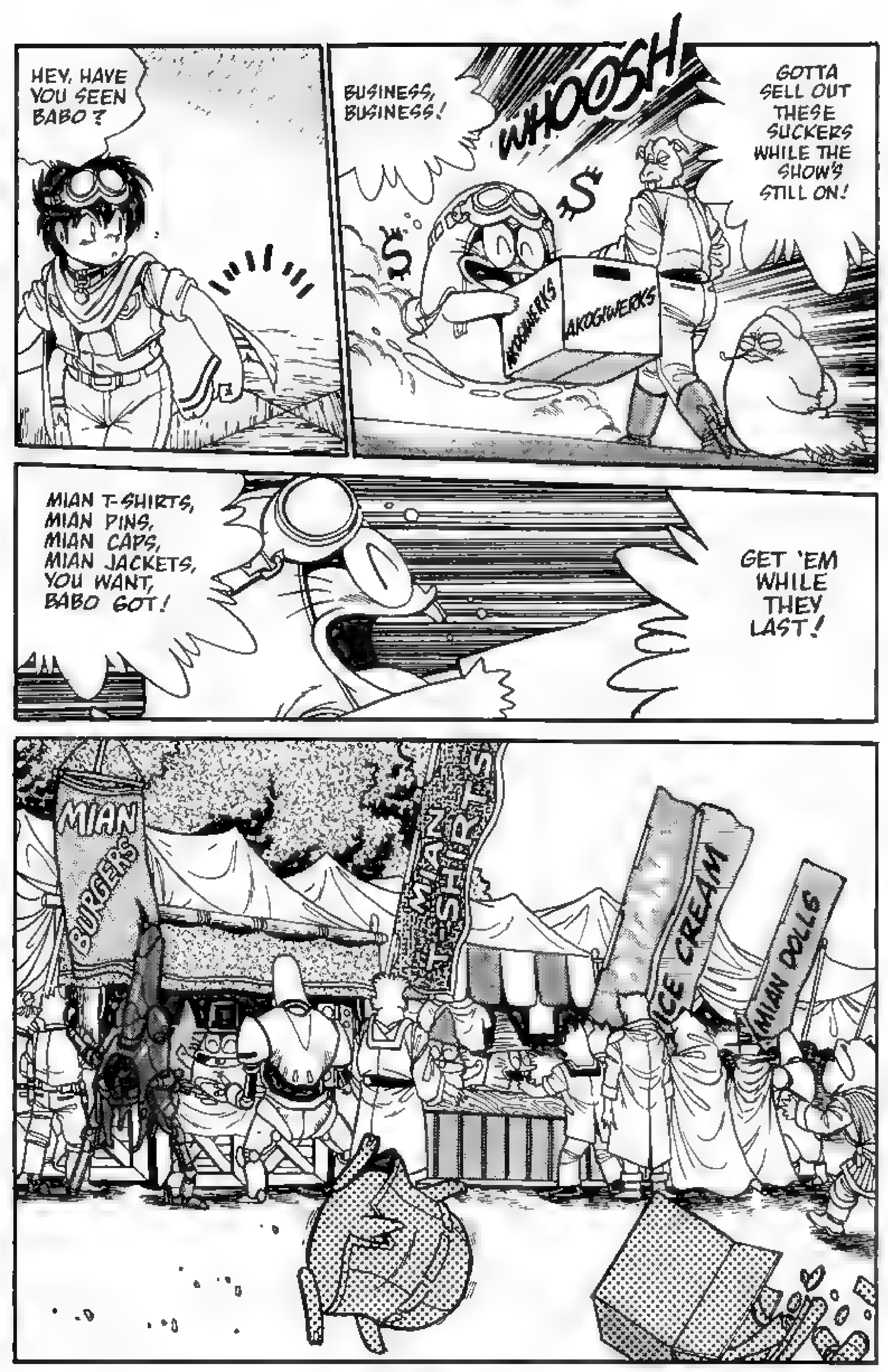
THIS BATTLE IS *YOUR* BATTLE, NOT MINE!

MIAN, MY HERO!!

YOU GUYS GOT A BEEF WITH THE EMPIRE? THEN SHOUT IT OUT!!

YOU THINK YOU'RE GOOD CITIZENS IF YOU JUST LIE LOW AND KEEP YOUR YAPS SHUT?

YEAH!
SHE'S RIGHT...
YEAH!
IT'S TRUE...
IT'S YOUR DESTINY! SEIZE IT! MAKE IT HAPPEN!
YEAH!
FIGHT YOUR OWN BATTLES!
OKAY, WATARU, WE'RE OUTTA HERE.
HUH?
THE EMPIRE'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE

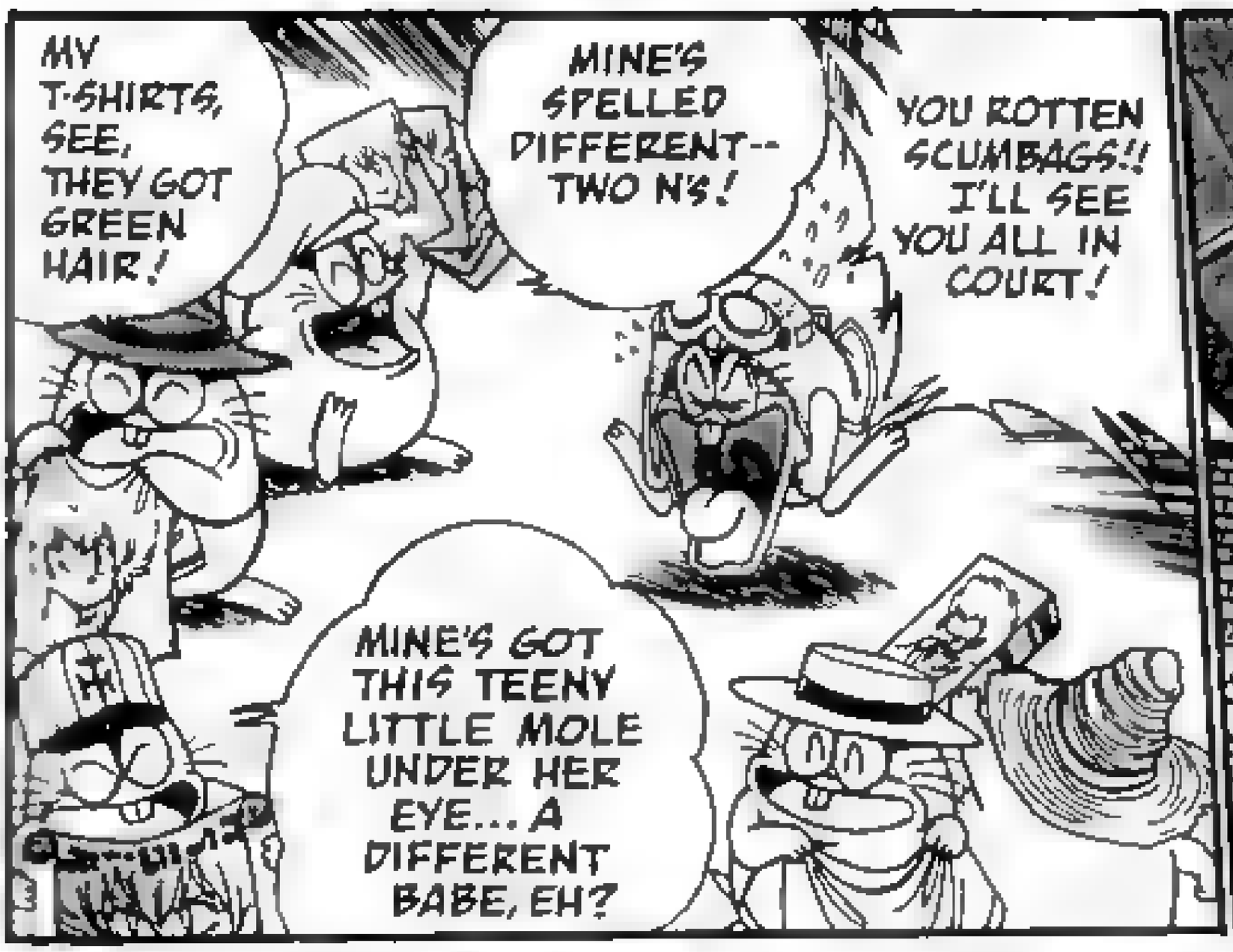

HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN BABO ?
BUSINESS, BUSINESS!
WHOOSH
GOTTA SELL OUT THESE SUCKERS WHILE THE SHOW'S STILL ON!
AKOGWERKS
MIAN T-SHIRTS, MIAN PINS, MIAN CAPS, MIAN JACKETS, YOU WANT, BABO GOT!
GET 'EM WHILE THEY LAST!
MIAN BURGERS
ICE CREAM
MIAN DOLLS

BRING A SMILE TO YOUR FACE! SUPER JUMBO MIAN HAPPY BADGES!
BUILDS YOUR BICEPS JUST PUTTING IT ON! MIAN T-SHIRTS, ONE SIZE FITS ALL!
PUT A LIFE-SIZE MIAN ON YOUR WALL! GIANT MIAN VELVET PAINTINGS!
HEY, JOE, YOU BUY FEELTHY MIAN PICTURE, MIAN SEXY SHOT? HUBBA HUBBA, CHEAP!
ADULTS ONLY
STEP RIGHT UP! CHEAPEST IN TOWN! WEAR ONE OF THESE AND YOU'RE SAFE FOR LIFE!
THE IMPERIALS SEE THIS ON YOU, THEY'LL HEAD FOR THE HILLS!
WHAT THE...
...HECK ?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS DOING ?!
HEY THERE! IT'S OUR OLD PAL BABO!
GET A LOAD OF THIS, MY BOY! IT'S A MEGA MIAN BOOM! CAN'T UNLOAD THIS CRAP FAST ENOUGH!
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THAT SHOW OF YOURS, PAL! WE OWE YOU ONE!

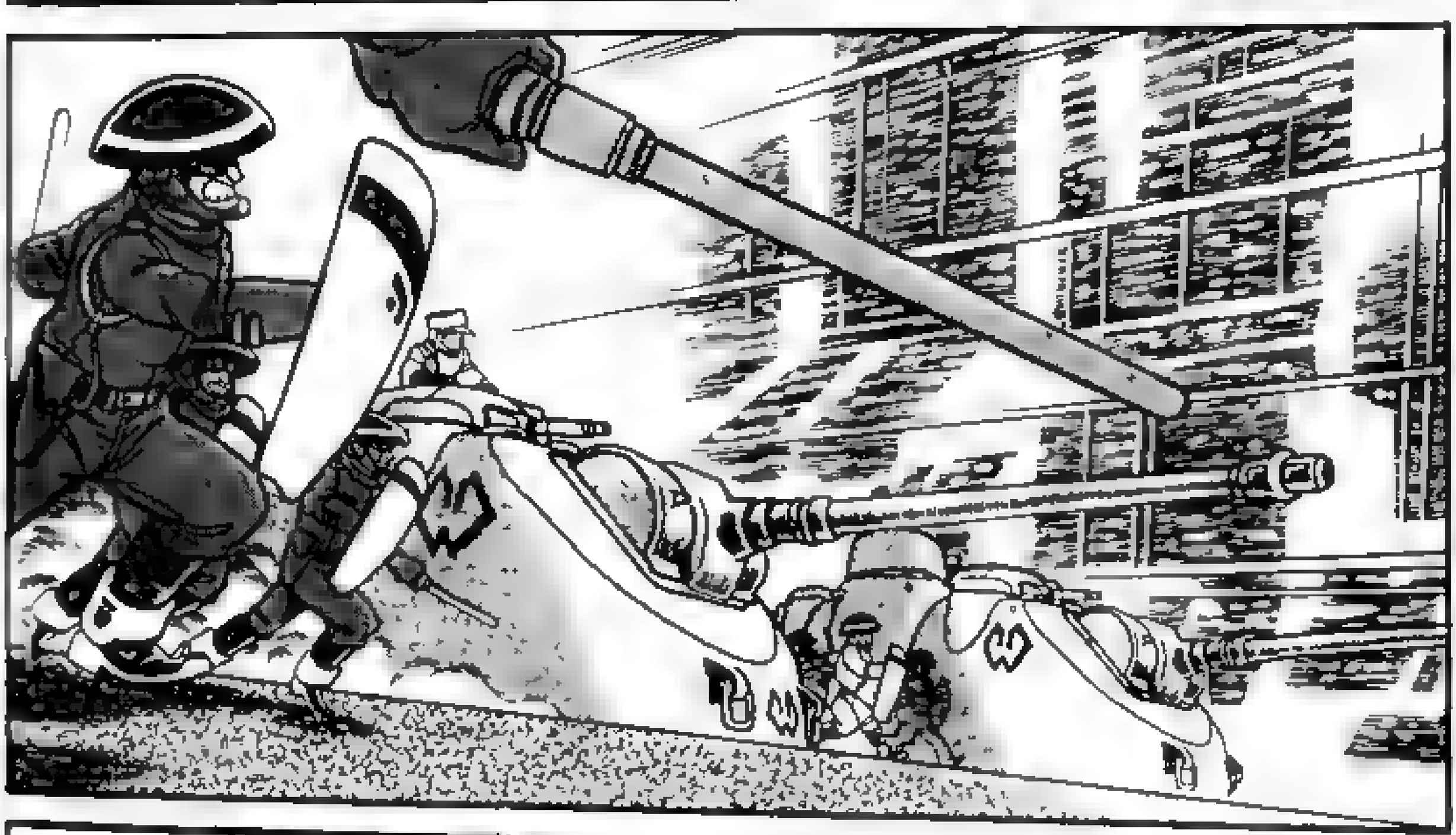
RAKING IT IN...???

HAND OVER FIST...!!!!

HOW DARE YOU, YOU LOUSY PIRATES!!!


MY T-SHIRTS, SEE, THEY GOT GREEN HAIR!
MINE'S SPELLED DIFFERENT-- TWO N'S!
YOU ROTTEN SCUMBAGS!! I'LL SEE YOU ALL IN COURT!
MINE'S GOT THIS TEENY LITTLE MOLE UNDER HER EYE... A DIFFERENT BABE, EH?

WEEOO WEEOO!!!



ARREST EVERYONE HERE! EVERYONE!!
AND EXECUTE ANYONE SELLING SUBVERSIVE MERCHANDISE!

MIAN! THE RIOT POLICE!
DAMN!

THERE SHE IS!

GET HER!!

TAKE THAT! AND THAT!

GET ME OUTTA HERE!

YOW!! MIAN, HELLLP!

STOP SELLING THOSE, YOU SWINE!

CITIZENS! GOOD CITIZENS! DISPERSE QUIETLY AND RETURN TO YOUR HOMES!

GATHERINGS ARE PROHIBITED BY SPECIAL CITY ORDINANCE!

YAARGH! AIIE!!

GOOD CITIZENS...!

BAMBA

EH?

BAMBAM

MS. MIAN! GET AWAY WHILE YOU CAN!
THANKS, GUYS!
S-STOP! HALT! YOWCH!
AHEM WHAT AN EXHAUSTING PANEL...

WHAT ?! A RIOT ?!
TRIGGERED BY MIAN TORIS ?!
EXCELLENT! JUST WHAT I WANTED, YOU BITCH!
THIS MAKES EVERYTHING EASY!
KLEEKAL
YOU WANT TO SELL MIAN GOODS, YOU SELL 'EM OVER MY DEAD BODY!
YOU CHEAP MISER! YOU WON'T GET A SINGLE D.D. OUTTA ME! NEVER!
MIAN, YOU WERE INCREDIBLE! I GOT GOOSEBUMPS ALL OVER!
OH MY GOD... I GAVE A WHOLE SPEECH! MAYBE KHADA WAS RIGHT ABOUT ME...

OPERATION EXTERMINATION

(OR THE GENERAL WHO KNEW TOO MUCH)

HARNSTEIN!
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU SENT A SPECIAL ASSASSINATION TEAM TO ELIMINATE MIAN TORIS!
I DID INDEED THEY SHOULD BE REACHING KAWACHI RIGHT ABOUT NOW
CHANNELS?! DID YOU GET
AND WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL SECURITY DO
ASSASSINATE!

ITS MY DUTY TO ELIMINATE THREATS TO THE EMPIRE.
THATS NOT WHAT IM SAYING, YOU FOOL!

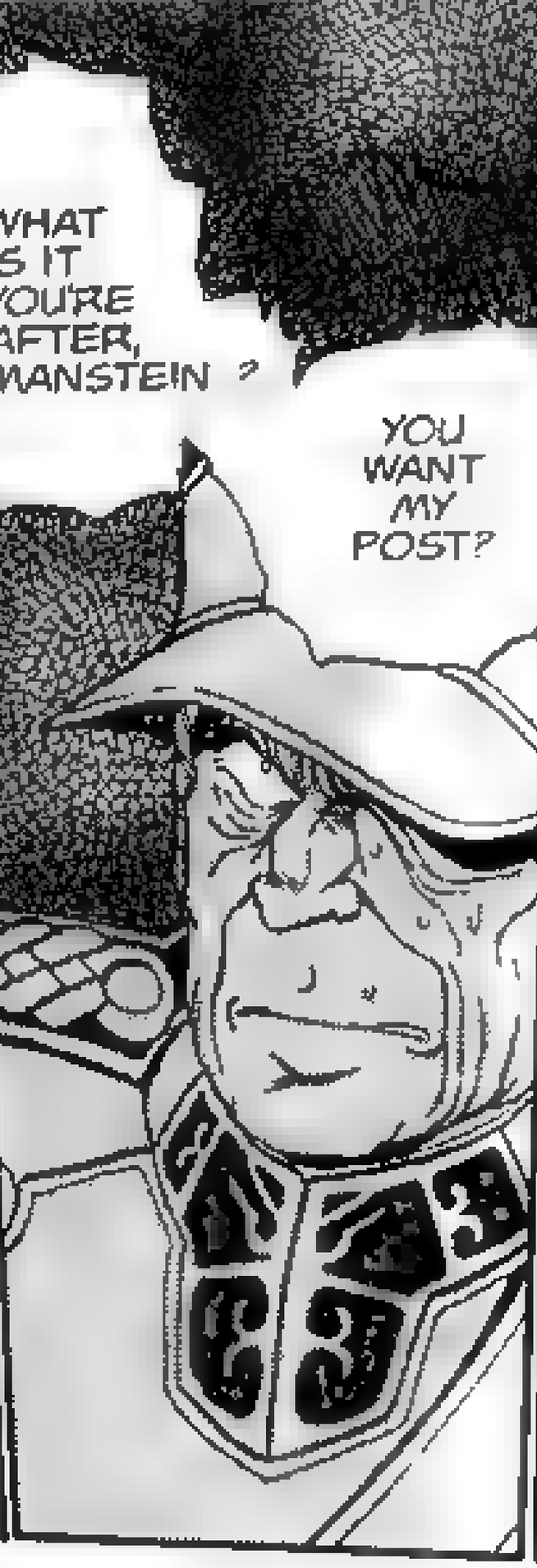
YOUR ACTIONS DEFY THE WILL OF THE EMPRESS! EMPRESS SHION ORDERED US TO LEAVE MIAN TORIS ALONE UNTIL SHE ENTERS THE CAPITAL!

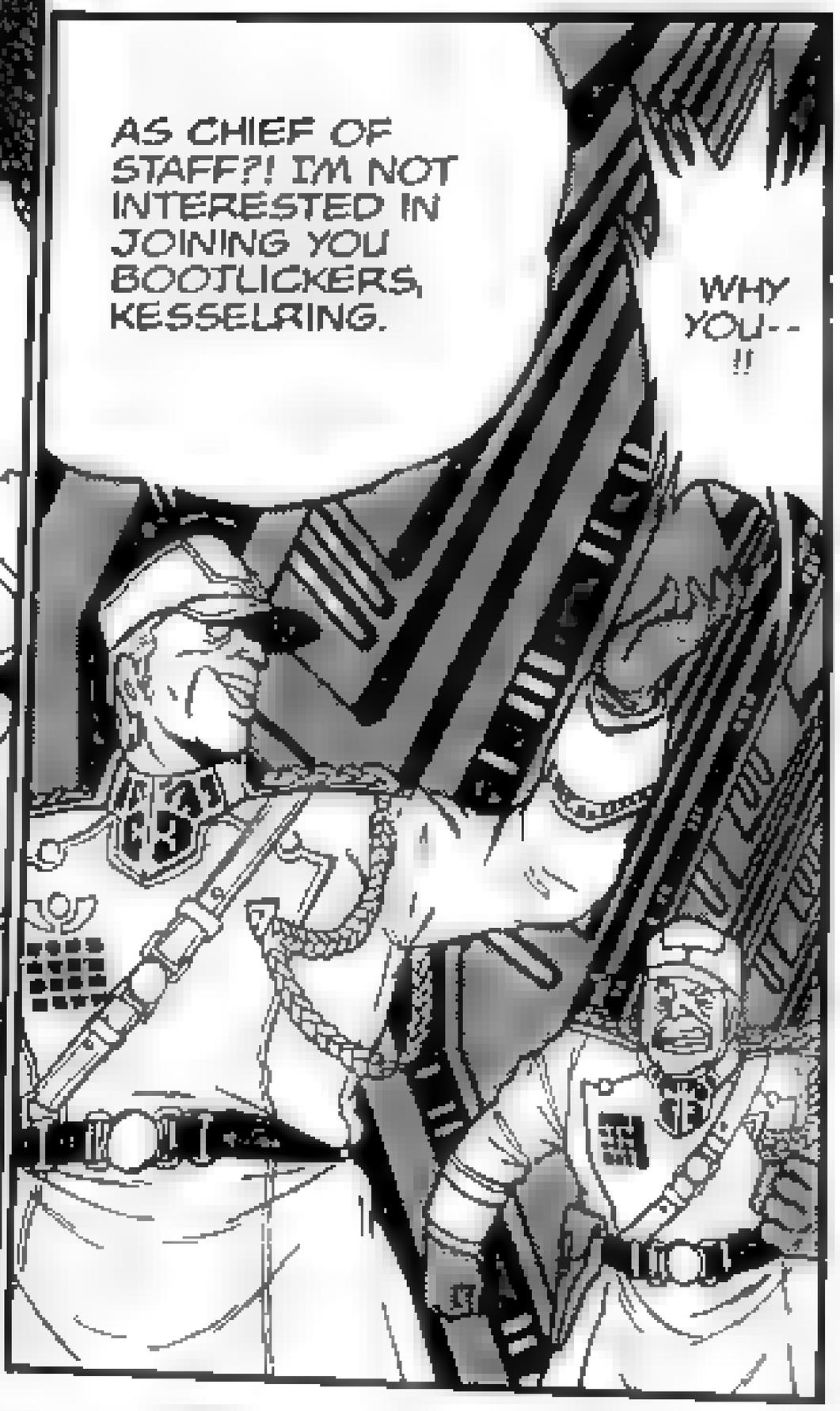
KESSELRING...

YOU DODDERING OLD FOOL! DO YOU REALIZE THE STATE THE EMPIRE IS IN?!!
WHAT IS THE EMPRESS THINKING, KESSELRING?! WE'RE IN THE GREATEST CRISIS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF HELGEBARD!
HAVE YOU REPORTED THAT TO THE EMPRESS?! EH?! HAVE YOU!
WHA--?

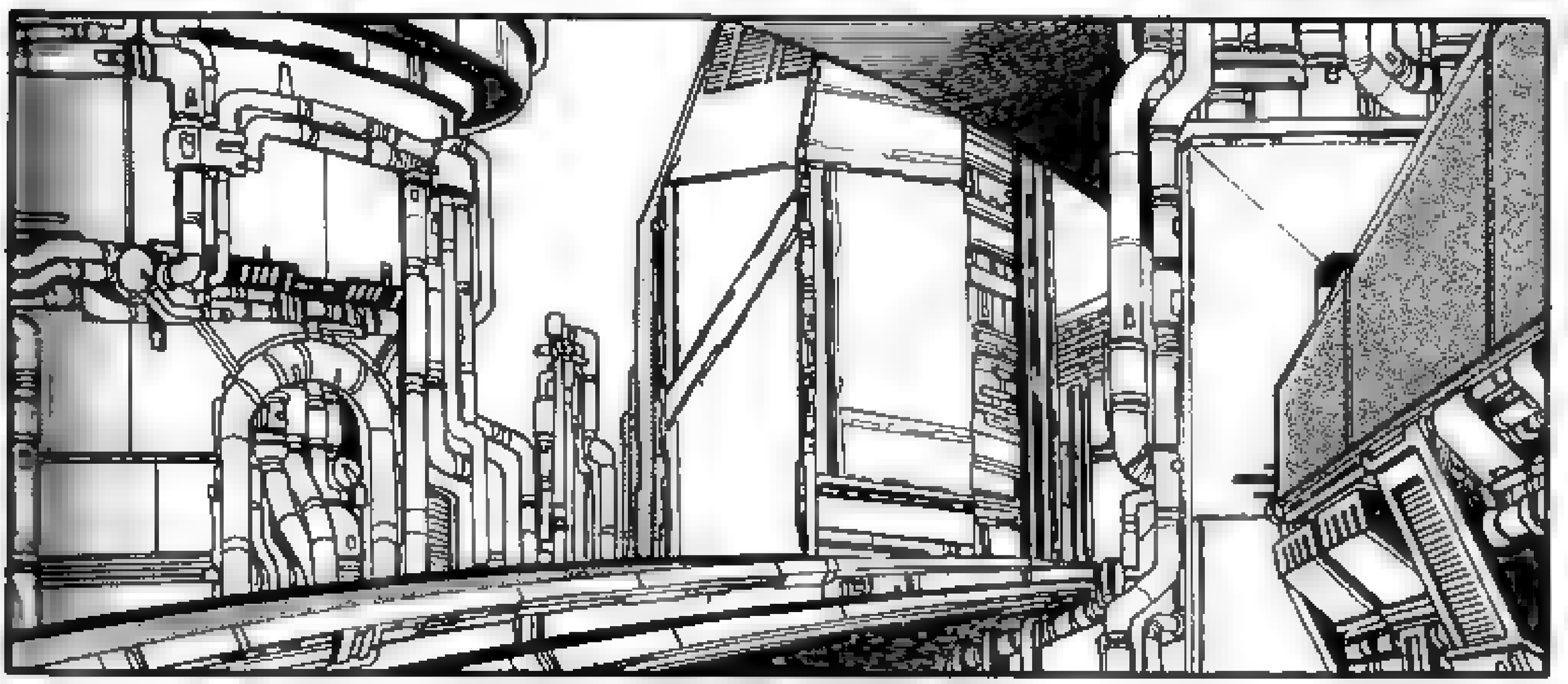
WE HAVE REPORTS OF RIOTS, STRIKES, AND SABOTAGE THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE EMPIRE!
THE REBELLION IS SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE, FROM THE CITIES INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE
AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF MIAN TORIS! HER INFLUENCE ALONE!
LET ME TAKE HER OUT, KESSELRING! IF I DO...
THE FIRES OF REVOLT WILL FLICKER OUT IN AN INSTANT!
DO YOU THINK I NEED A YOUNG PUP LIKE YOU TO TELL ME THAT, MANSTEIN?!
THE PROBLEM HERE IS YOUR UNAUTHORIZED ACTION!
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE JOINT CHIEFS TO GET OFF THEIR COLLECTIVE BUTT, KESSELRING.
I'M INTERESTED IN RESULTS BY WHATEVER MEANS!
IT WON'T WORK, MANSTEIN!
PULL BACK YOUR MEN IMMEDIATELY!

TRY TO STOP ME, KESSELRING... IF YOU HAVE THE GUTS.


WHAT IS IT YOU'RE AFTER, MANSTEIN ?
YOU WANT MY POST?

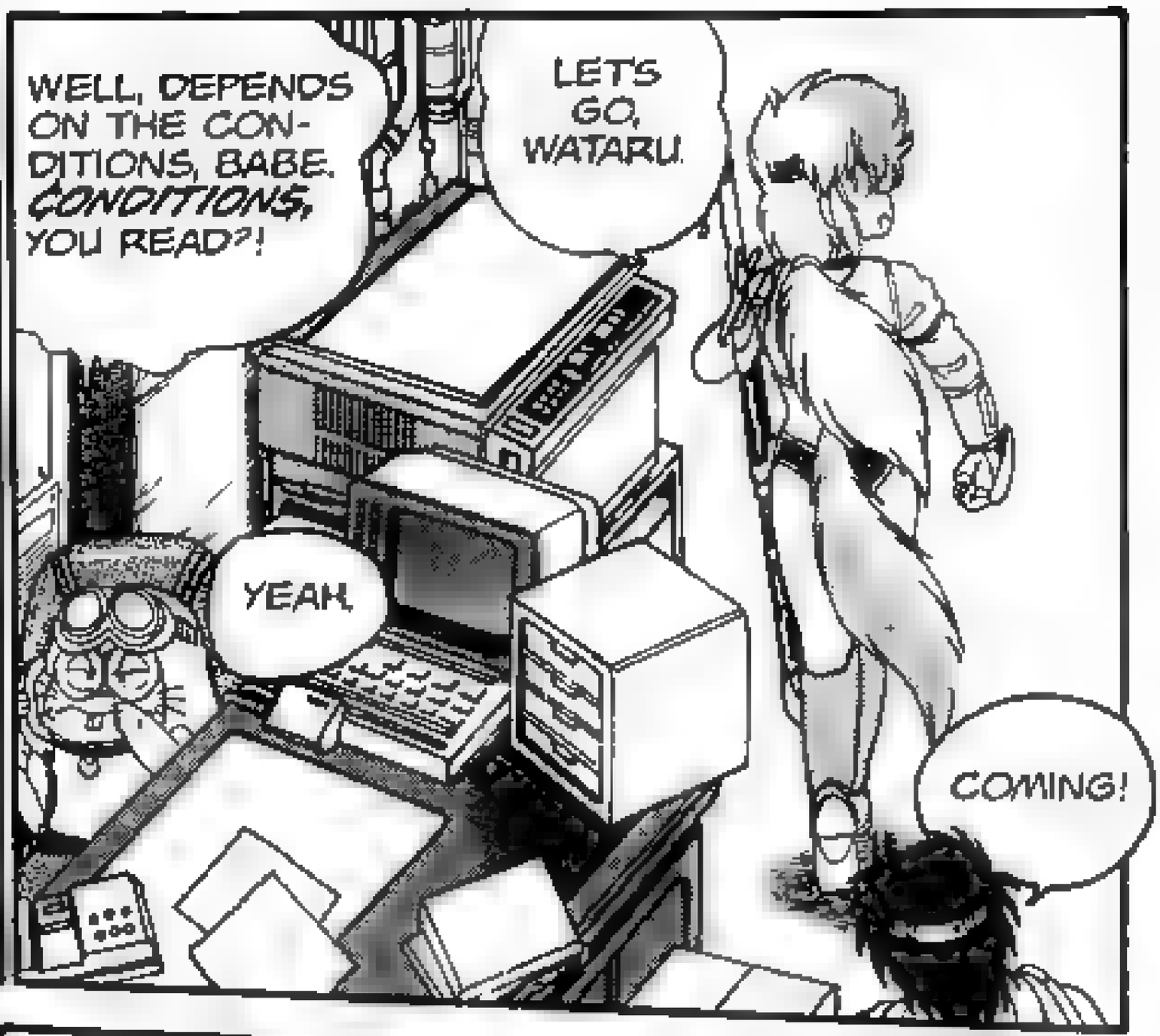

AS CHIEF OF STAFF?! I'M NOT INTERESTED IN JOINING YOU BOOTLICKERS, KESSELRING.
WHY YOU-- !!

I JUST DON'T LIKE IT, KESSELRING. I DON'T LIKE SEEING ONE LITTLE BITCH RUN OUR EMPIRE INTO THE GROUND!



GEE, THE NEWS SAYS THERE'RE RIOTS BREAKING OUT ALL OVER
WHAT A MESS...
WHATCHA GONNA DO?
BUT I GUESS WE CAN ALWAYS USE IT FOR COVER TO BREAK INTO KYURAWEIL KEEP.
RRINGG
YO, OPRAH, BABY? YEAH, THIS IS AKOGI PRODUCTIONS.
YOU WANT MIAN? LIVE?
"FOR LOVE OF MONEY" BABO
IT'S GONNA HAVETA BE AFTER NINE, BABE. YEAH, AND FOR A PRICE, SWEETHEART. SCHEDULE'S PACKED, SEE?
YOU WANT SOME MIAN MERCHANDISE FOR GIVEAWAYS?
HEY, THAT'S FOR THE CONTRACT. DETAILS THEN, YOU GOT ME?

HELLO? YOU WANT TO DO A MIAN VIDEO GAME?
LOOK, THIS CARTOONIST I KNOW TELLS ME THEY DON'T MAKE MONEY FOR THE CREATOR. RAW DEAL.
AND IT WAS BORING, TOO!


WELL, DEPENDS ON THE CONDITIONS, BABE. CONDITIONS, YOU READ?!
LET'S GO, WATARU.
YEAH.
COMING!

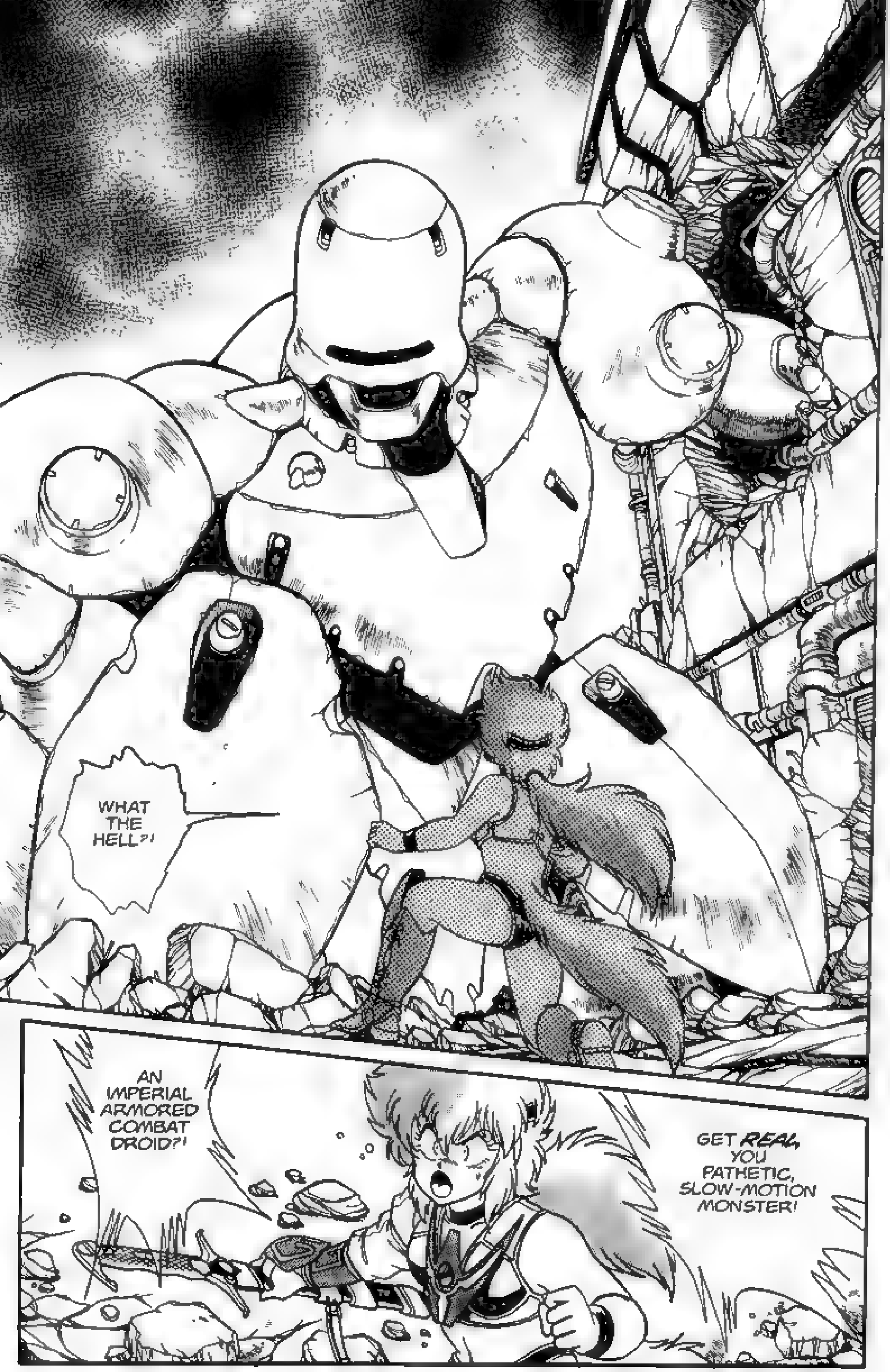
HEY! WHERE THE HELL YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?! THE STATION'S GOT A STRETCH LIMO ON THE WAY RIGHT NOW!
WE'RE LEAVING, SPLITTING THIS BURG, HITTING THE ROAD!

WHAT?! BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MOVIES! TWO OF 'EM! FIVE TV SPECIALS, CONTRACTS SIGNED AND SEALED! WHAT'M I GONNA DO?!
YOU SIGNED EM, YOU BREAK 'EM.

BABE, SWEETIE, HONEY!!
THIS IS PAYOFF TIME! YOU GOT MONEY, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING!
EXPENSIVE WINES! FINE CLOTHES! CARS! MEN!
"MEN" ...?
YEAH! YOU CAN BUY A CUTE NEW GIGOLO EVERY NIGH-RNK!
NOT MY STYLE, BLOBBO!

WHAT'S THAT?
WHOOM
WHOOM
OHMIGOD! IT'S THE GUYS FROM THE STUDIO! GET YOUR MAKEUP ON!
SINCE WHEN DID STUDIOS START HIRING--

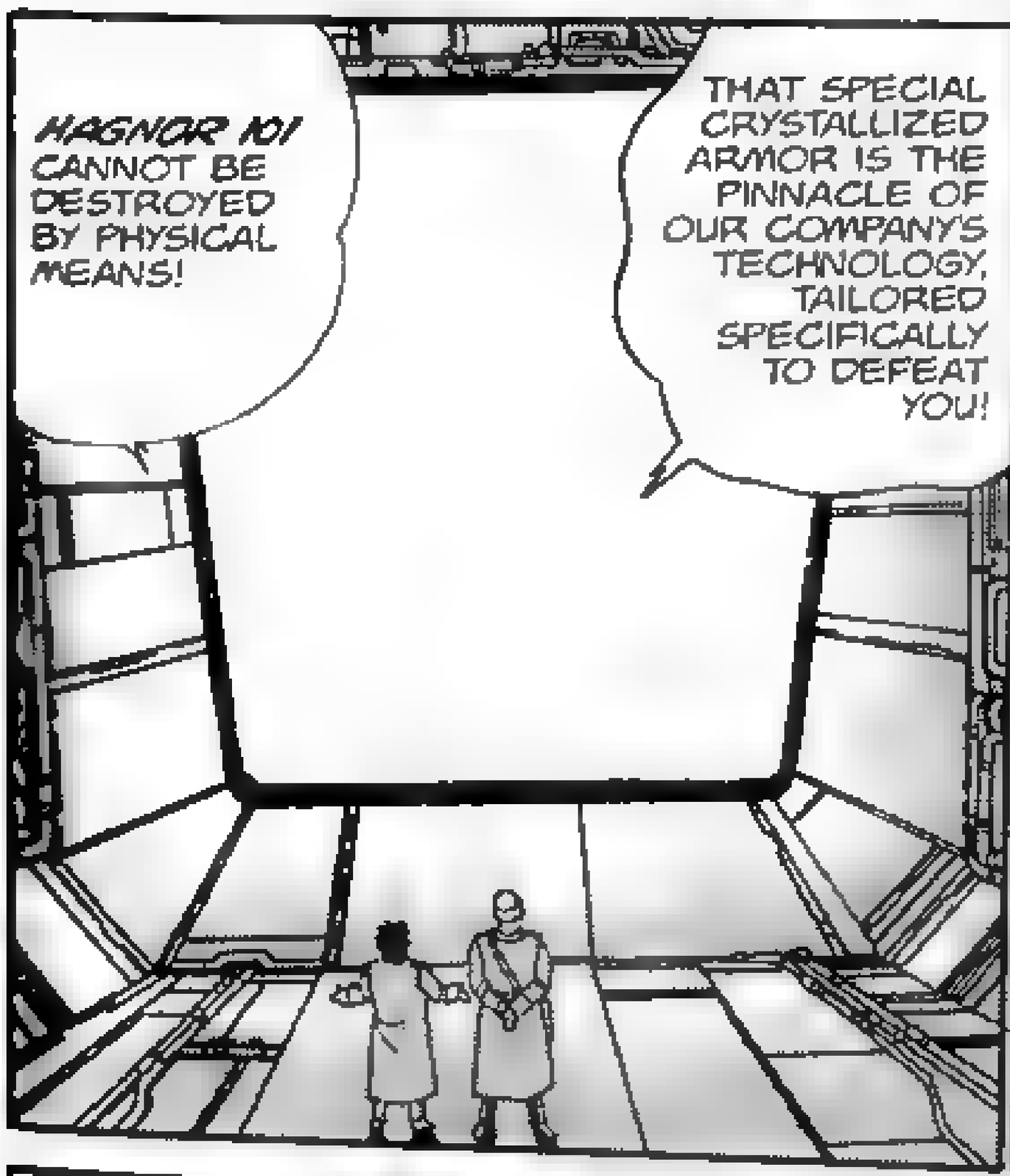
RUN FOR IT!!


WHAT THE HELL?!
AN IMPERIAL ARMORED COMBAT DROID?!
GET REAL, YOU PATHETIC, SLOW-MOTION MONSTER!

RUSTY JUNKHEAP!
DIE!
KRANGGGG

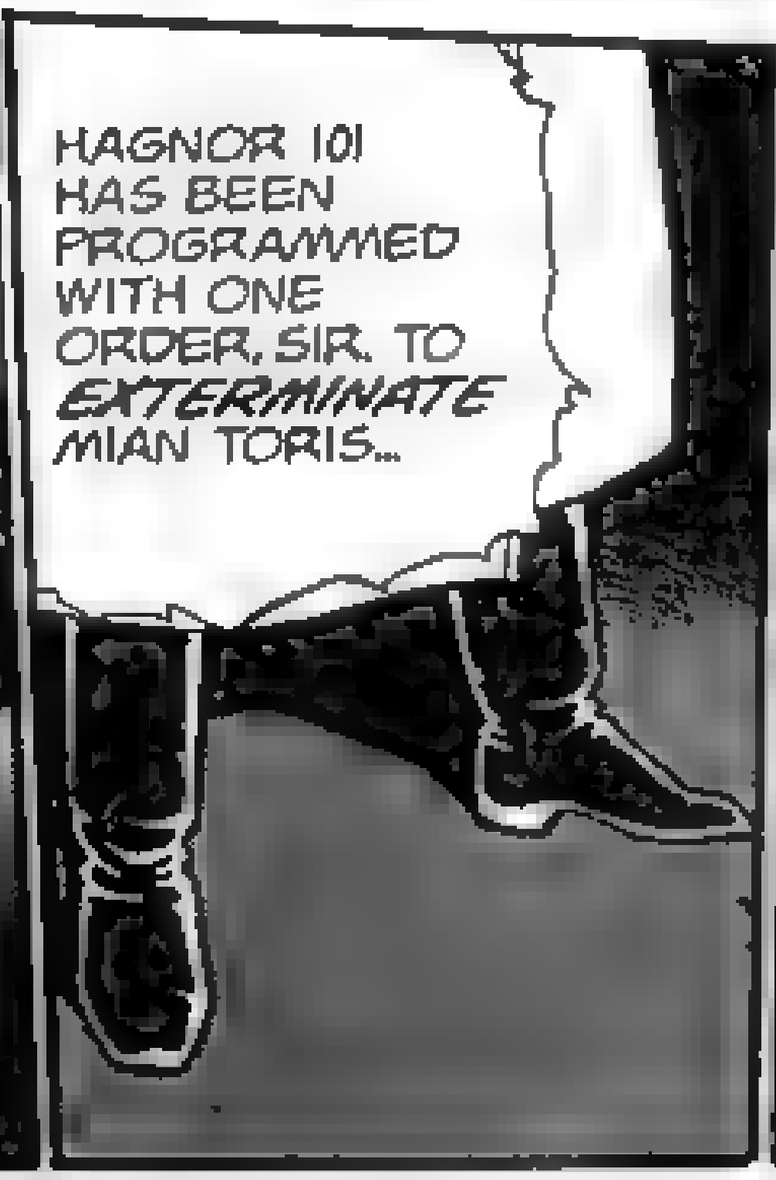
EEK!
OW OW OWW!!
WHAT THE HELL IS IT MADE OF?
YIKES!
THERE'S A TIME TO FIGHT, AND A TIME TO RUN!

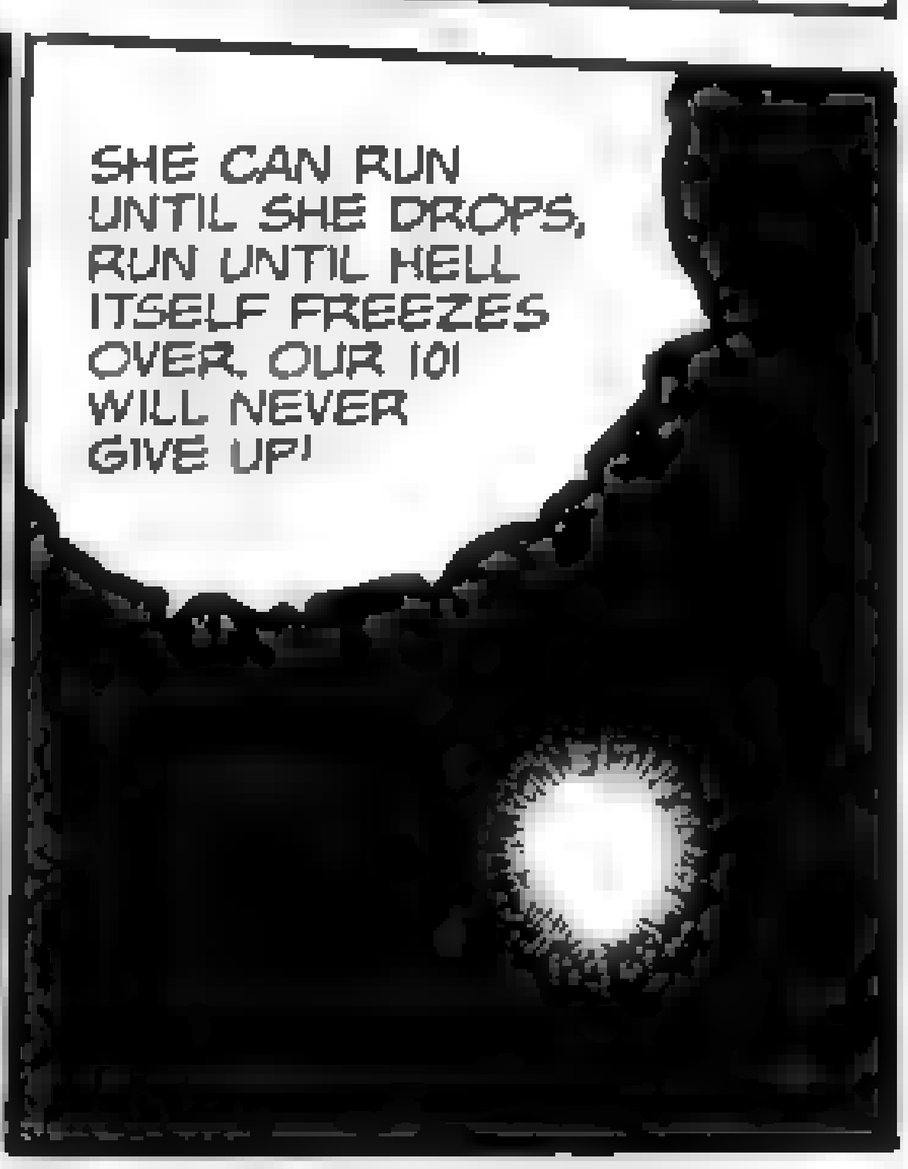
JUST HOW LONG DID YOU THINK YOU COULD KEEP USING THAT SWORD EH? FOOLISH GIRL.


HAGNOR 101 CANNOT BE DESTROYED BY PHYSICAL MEANS!
THAT SPECIAL CRYSTALLIZED ARMOR IS THE PINNACLE OF OUR COMPANY'S TECHNOLOGY, TAILORED SPECIFICALLY TO DEFEAT YOU!

VERY IMPRESSIVE. THIS DEMONSTRATION SHOULD GUARANTEE YOUR COMPANY A LARGE PRODUCTION ORDER. VERY LARGE, INDEED.
WE OWE IT ALL TO YOU, SIR. AND WE REMEMBER OUR FRIENDS.

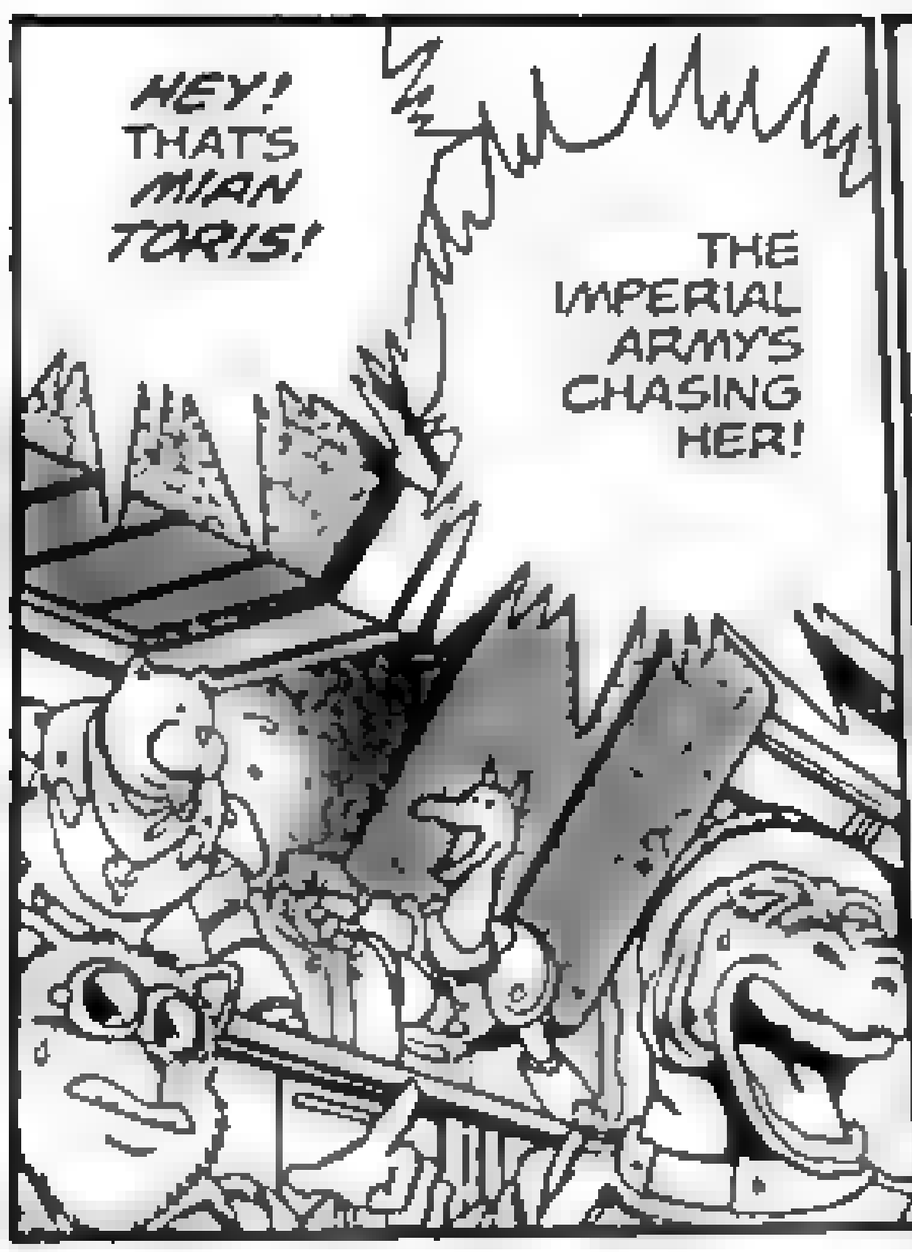
A SMALL... HONORARIUM?
OF COURSE, GENERAL...

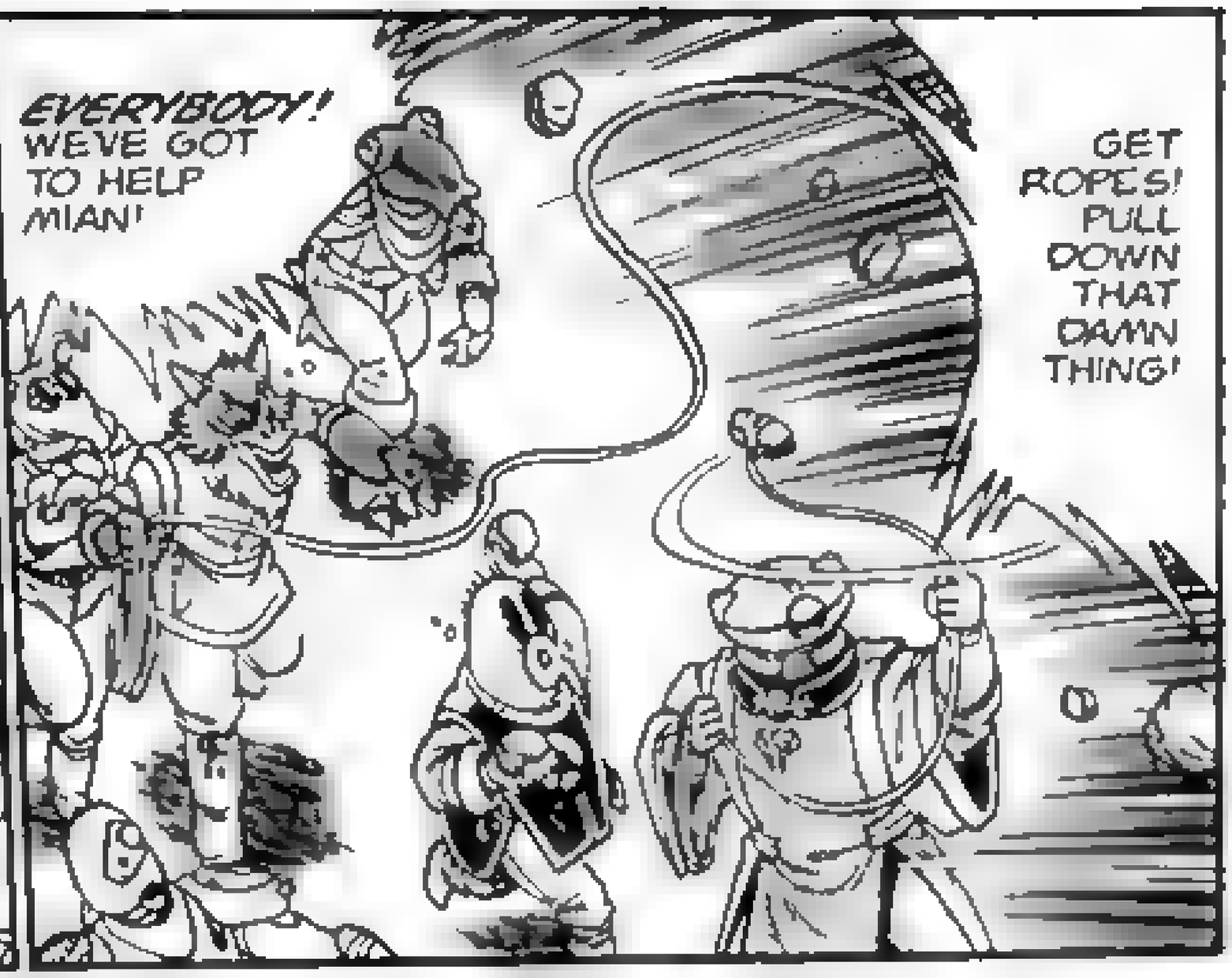

HAGNOR 101 HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED WITH ONE ORDER, SIR. TO EXTERMINATE MIAN TORIS...


SHE CAN RUN UNTIL SHE DROPS, RUN UNTIL HELL ITSELF FREEZES OVER. OUR 101 WILL NEVER GIVE UP!

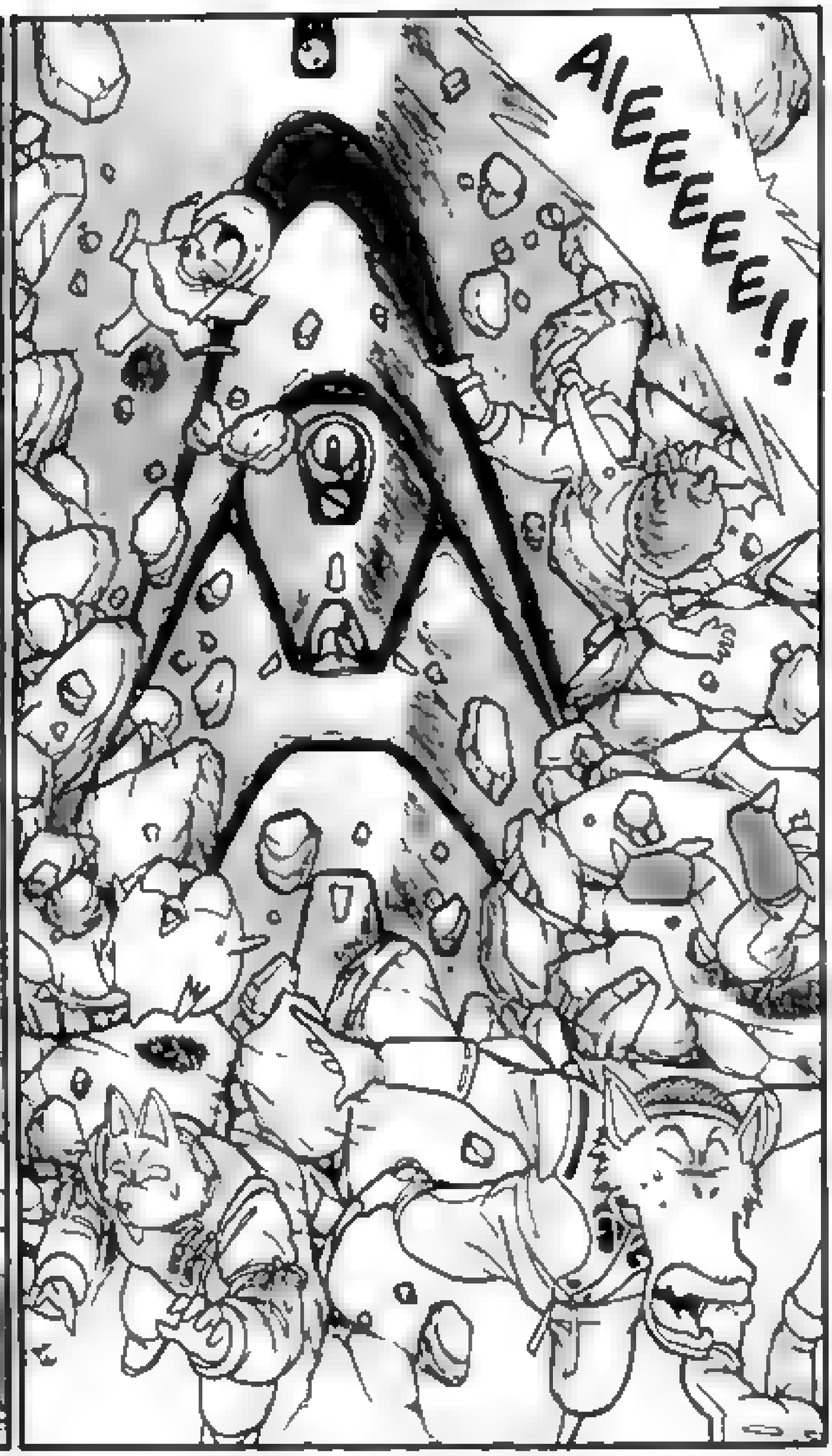
YOW! WHAT THE HELL *IS* THAT THING?!

RUN FOR IT! YOU'LL BE TRAMPLED TO DEATH!

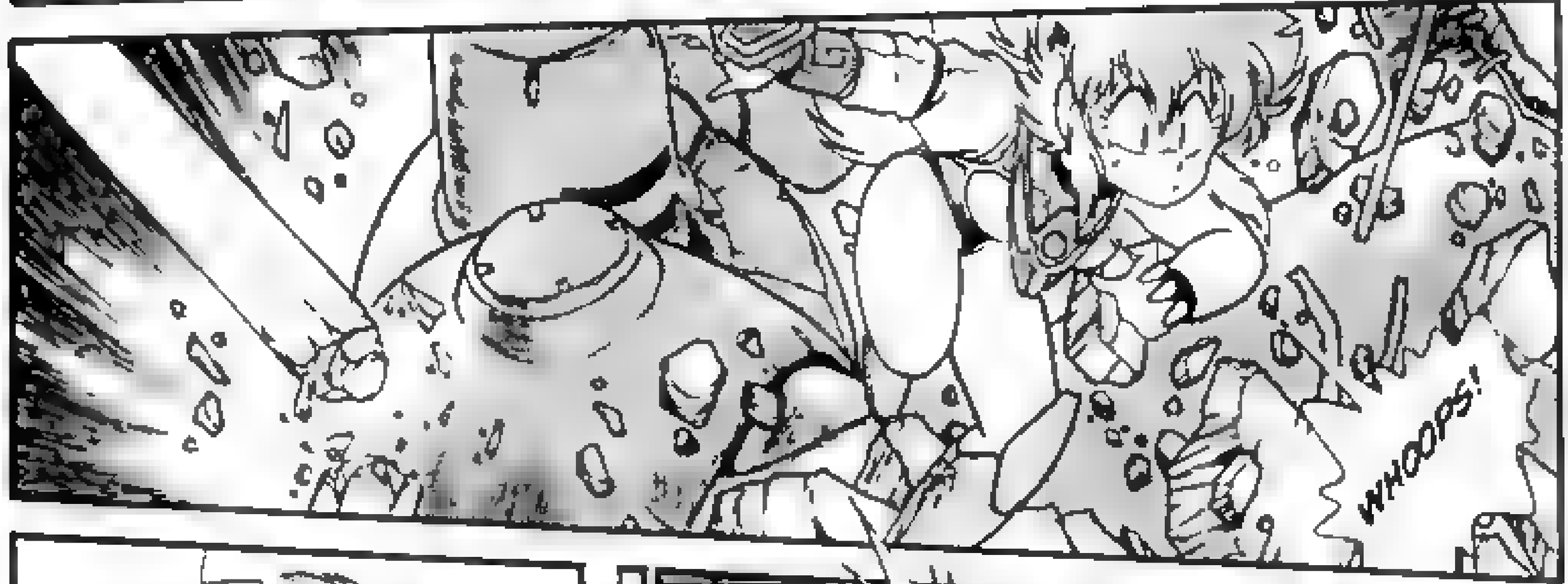

HEY! THATS MIAN TORIS!
THE IMPERIAL ARMY'S CHASING HER!


EVERYBODY! WE'VE GOT TO HELP MIAN!
GET ROPES! PULL DOWN THAT DAMN THING!

GO! GO!
GET IT!!


AIEEEEE!!

GET BACK!
YOU'LL ALL BE KILLED!


WHOOPS!

YOU DON'T GIVE UP, DO YOU?!

WHAM
TH-THAT'S ONE FOR YOU...!

HNN...

MIAN !!

JUST LOOK AT THIS MESS !

W... WATARU ?

YOU BIG BULLY!

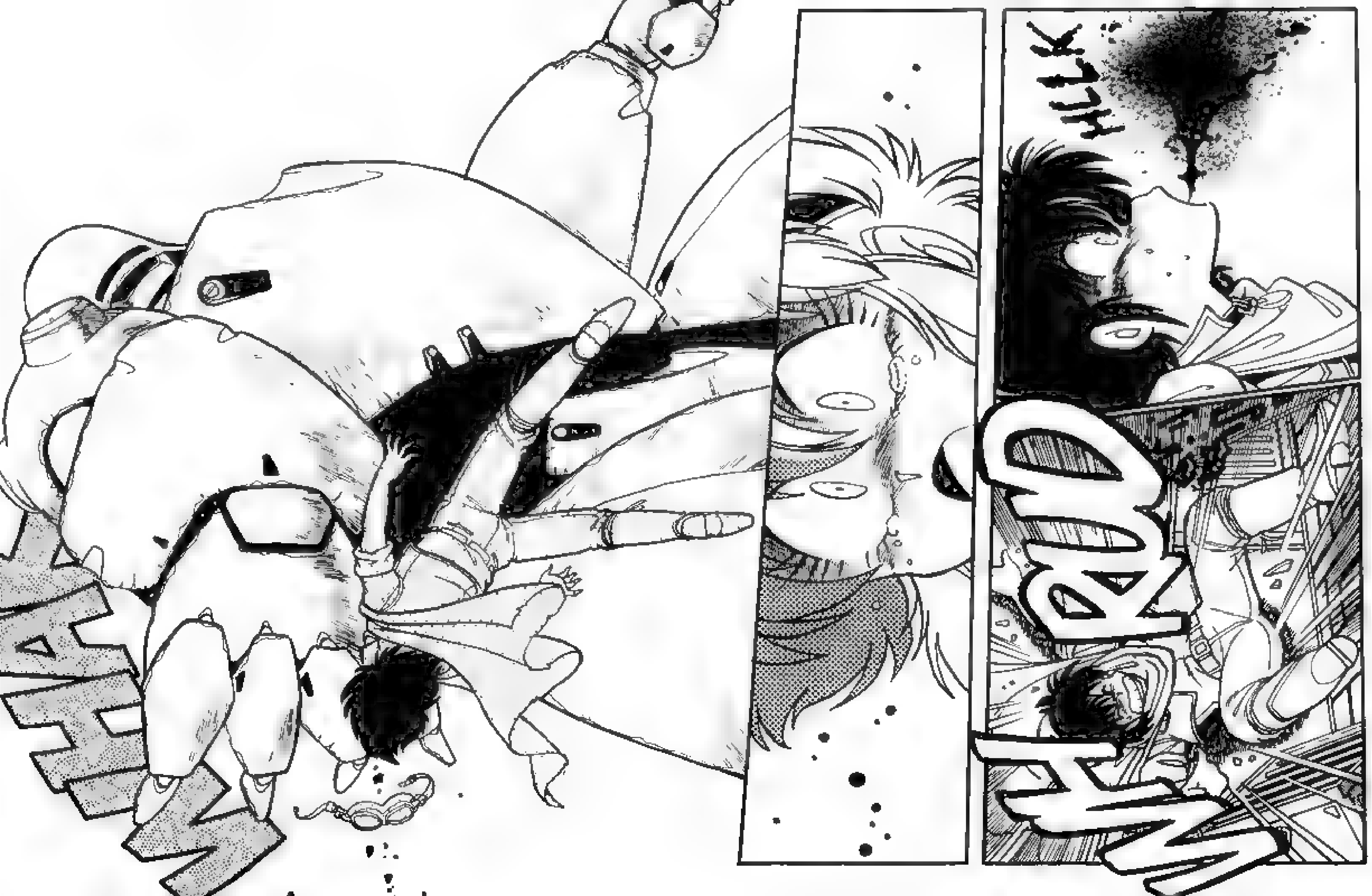
KANG KANG KANG KANG

WATARU!! DON'T BE AN IDIOT!! GET AWAY!

WHY YOU, I OUGHTA--

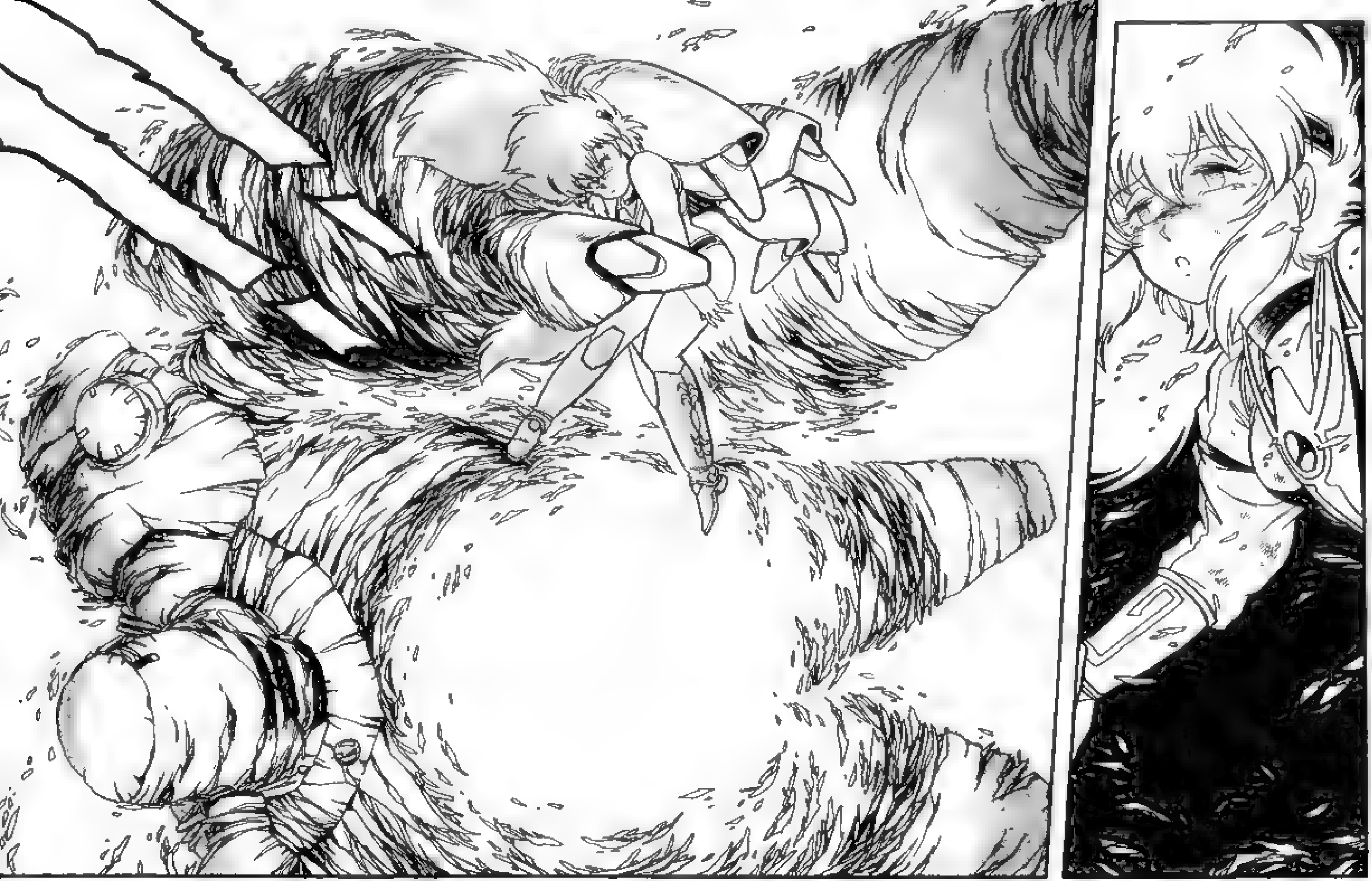
OW OW OW!!

WATARU!!!


ドガッ

MI...AN...
SKSSHH
WATARU!!
YOU CAN'T...
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...
!!
LEGGO YOU--!!

KNCH
KNCH
KNCH
NGG!!
DAMN IT! NOT NOW! WE'VE COME SO FAR...
SKRAAK
IT'S THE END...
SHI_
ON_



WHAT THE-!

WHAT THE HELL HAP-PENED! TELL ME!!
I DON'T KNOW! I'VE NO IDEA!

BRAVO, BRAVO!
CLAP CLAP!

A STUNNING PERFORMANCE, GENERAL MANSTEIN!
!!

I'M SURE OUR MAJESTY ENJOYED YOUR LITTLE COMEDY
KESSELRING, HOW?

SO THAT'S IT!
IT'S YOUR DOING! SOME FILTHY TRICK!!

STOP WHIMPERING, MANSTEIN!!

IT SEEMS I OVER-ESTIMATED YOU, GENERAL!

Y-YOUR HIGHNESS!

I SENT A HYPO-WAVE TO DESTORY YOUR GRUBBY LITTLE TOY...

BUT... BUT *WHY?!*

THAT GIRL IS AN ENEMY OF THE EMPIRE! YOUR *OWN* ENEMY, MAJESTY!

"WHY"...?! YOU DARE QUESTION MY ORDERS, MANSTEIN?!

I SAID TO *CAPTURE* HER, NOT *ELIMINATE* HER!

YET EVEN NOW, HER INFLUENCE...

STOPPING HER HAS TO COME FIRST!

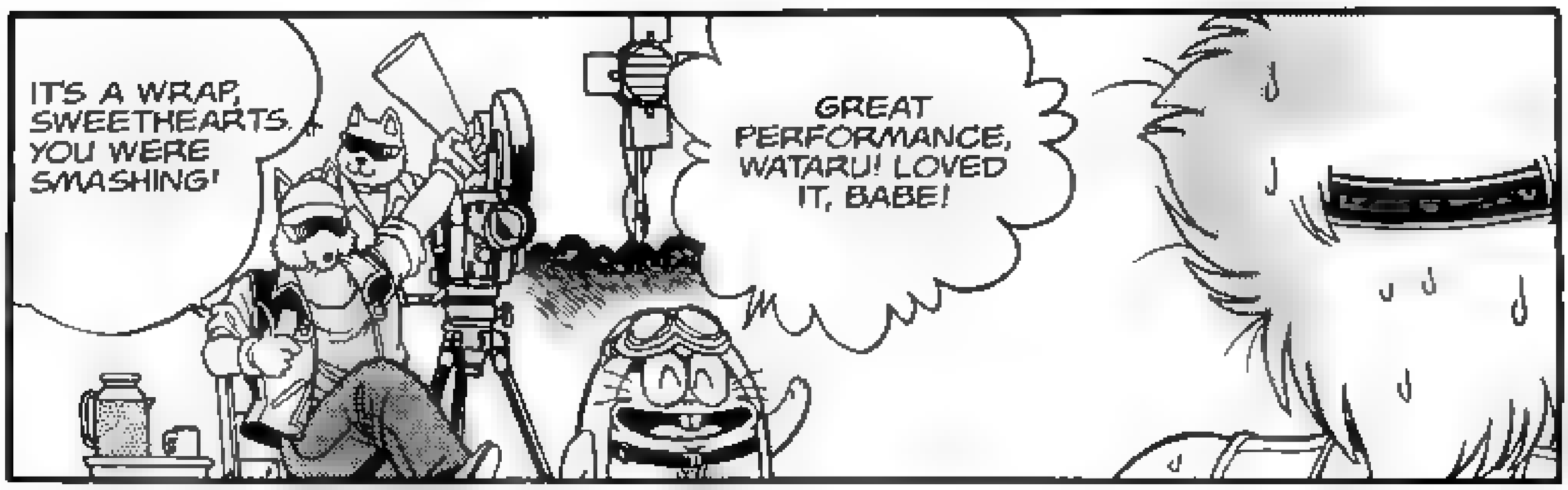
YOU DISOBEYED MY ORDERS.

YOU DISOBEYED *ME!*

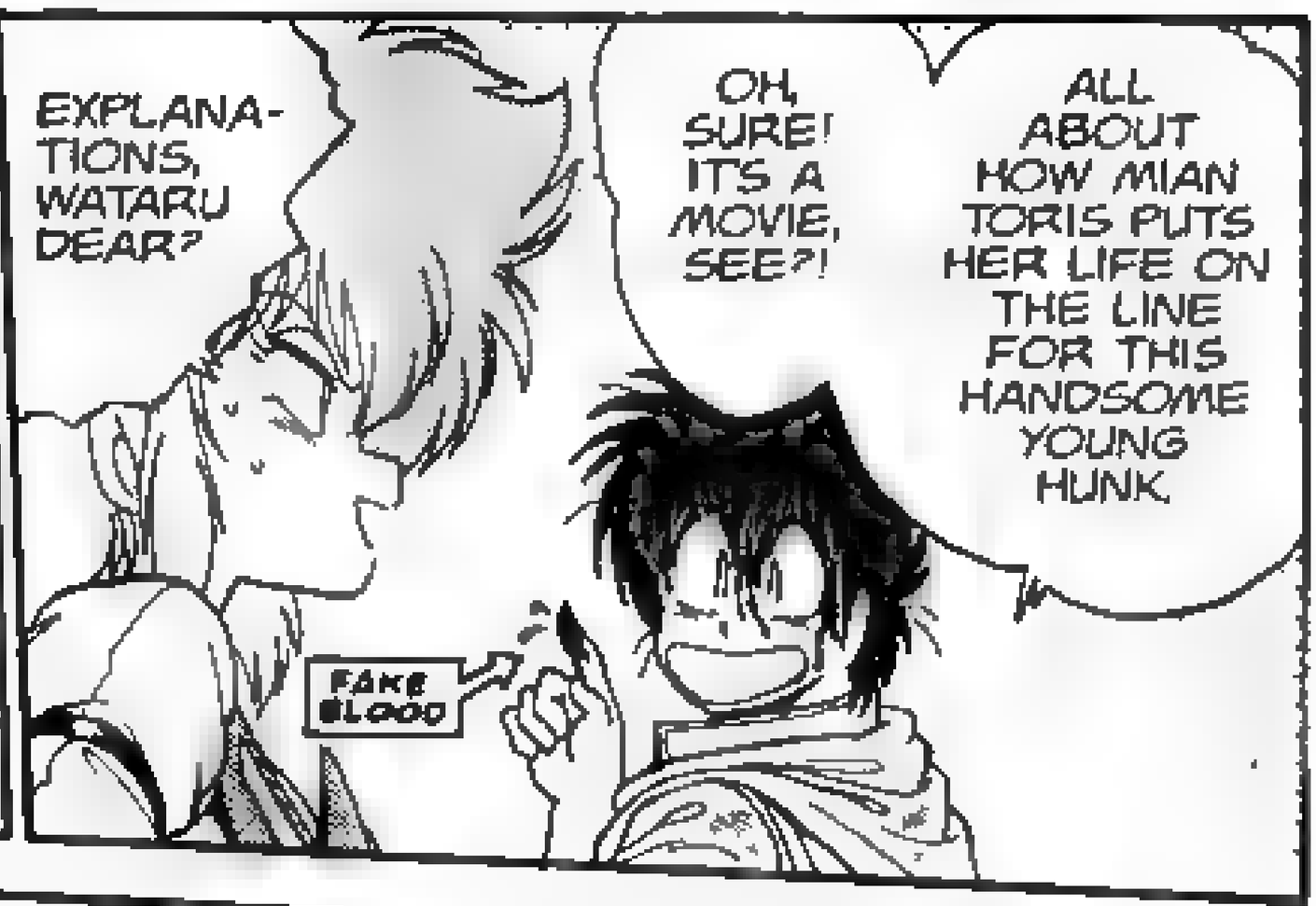
NOW YOU MAY SAMPLE THE EXQUISITE PLEASURE OF A LIVING HELL! TAKE HIM TO *DUNGEON FOUR!*

WATARU...

M-MY POOR WATARU !!!
CUT!!
EH ?


IT'S A WRAP, SWEETHEARTS. YOU WERE SMASHING!
GREAT PERFORMANCE, WATARU! LOVED IT, BABE!

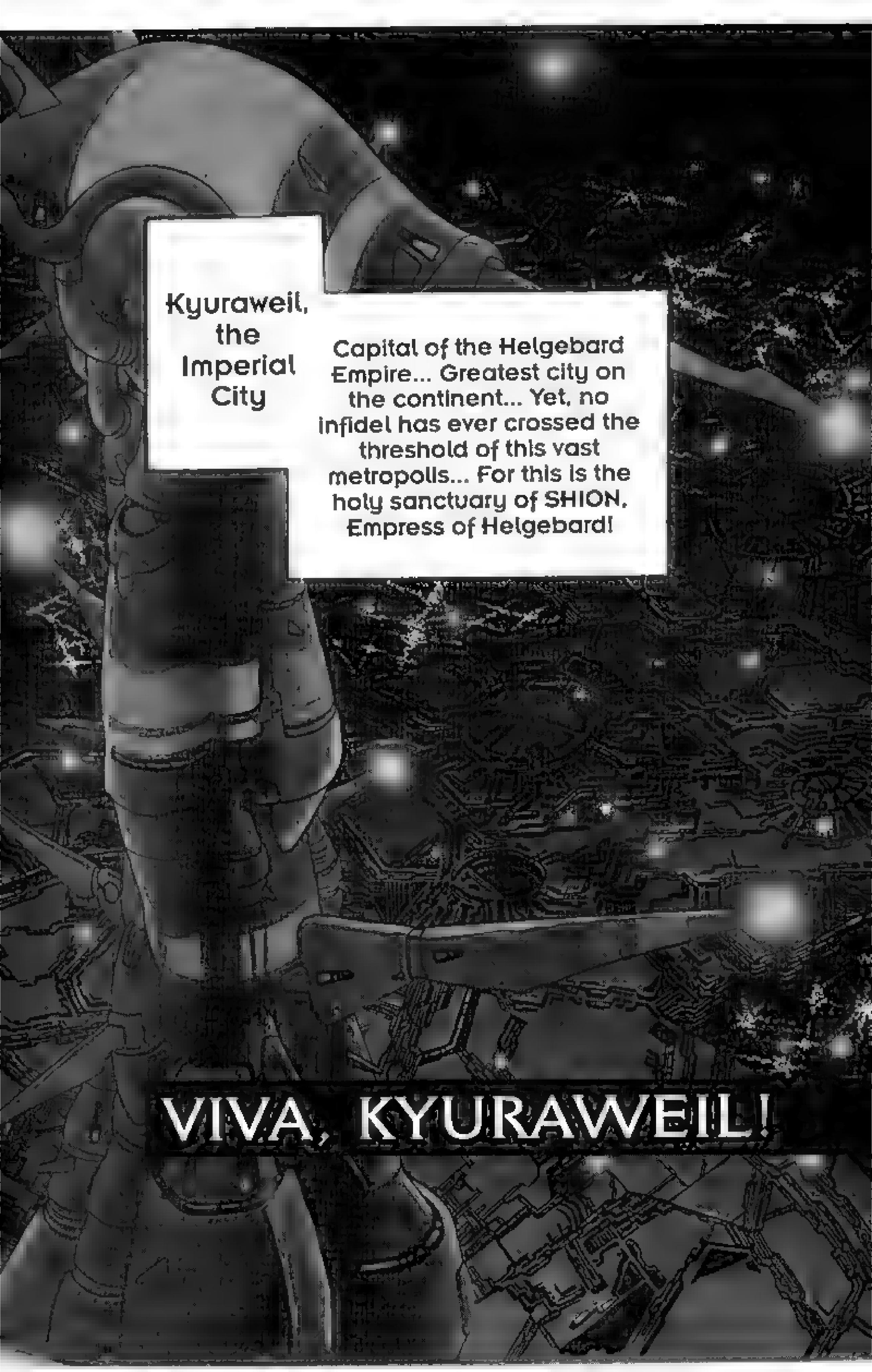
NO KIDDING?!
!


EXPLANA-TIONS, WATARU DEAR?
OH, SURE! ITS A MOVIE, SEE?!
ALL ABOUT HOW MIAN TORIS PUTS HER LIFE ON THE LINE FOR THIS HANDSOME YOUNG HUNK.
FAKE BLOOD

I TELL YA, REALITY'S THE WAY TO GO WITH COMBAT SCENES. CHEAP, TOO!
IT WAS WORTH WAITING FOR THE EMPIRE TO SHOW UP AFTER ALL.
HOW YOU FEELING, STAR?
PIECE'A CAKE! ♫

THE WAY MIAN BEATS UP ON ME ALL THE TIME, THAT WAS NOTHIN' BUT A LITTLE LOVE TAP!
HSSSS

WAAHH! MY FILM, MY PRECIOUS FILM!
LET ME TOUGHEN YOU UP A BIT MORE, YOU LITTLE RAT!!
YA! EE!


Kyuraweil, the Imperial City
Capital of the Helgebard Empire... Greatest city on the continent... Yet, no infidel has ever crossed the threshold of this vast metropolis... For this is the holy sanctuary of SHION, Empress of Helgebard!
VIVA, KYURAWEIL!

VREEEE!
WHEW...
WATARU, GET OUT HERE AND GIVE ME A HAND!
WATARU!
YOU LAZY SLUG! WHERE ARE YOU, ANYWAY ?!
YUM-YUM ♡

GREAT VIEW!
HA-HA-HA!!!
AW, KNOCK IT OFF, MIAN! WHAT OTHER PERKS DO I GET?!
PUNCHES, KICKS, AND BEATINGS, THAT'S ALL!
SHUT UP, YOU FILTHY, DEPRAVED PERVERT!!!
C'MON, MIAN-- I SAID KNOCK IT OFF, NOT CUT IT OFF!
HAH! PROBABLY NOT EVEN THAT WOULD STOP YOU, YOU TWISTOID!

GEEZ COULDN'T YOU FIND SOMETHING BETTER THAN THIS OLD RUSTBUCKET ?

THE H-CLASS MIZET IS THIRTY YEARS OLD, EASY!

QUIT YOUR BITCHING, WILL YOU ?

THEY GAVE IT TO US FREE REMEMBER! "HELP THE REVOLUTION," ALL THAT CRAP

BUT THEY SAID IF WE'D WAIT A DAY OR TWO, THEY'D GET US A NEW-- *YEOWW!!*

HEY I'M IN A HURRY

KYLRAWEIL'S ONLY A FEW HOURS AWAY EVEN IN THIS OLD HEAP THERE'S NO RUSH.

MAYBE NOT ON OUR END BUT SHION'S NOT GOING TO WAIT FOR ME TO GET THERE

SHION'T WHY? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

NOTHING! JUST SHUT UP AND WORK!

WELL, I MAY NOT REALLY KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON...
...BUT IT SURE LOOKS LIKE OUR TRIP'S ALMOST OVER ..
I MEAN, KYURAWEIL'S RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSE PRACTICALLY.
IT'S BEEN A LONG JOURNEY...

MIAN, I'VE BEEN WONDERING...
YEAH ? WHAT ?
NOTHING. IT'S JUST...
ONCE THIS TRIP IS OVER, WHATCHA GONNA DO ?

WELL, WELL..
I HAVEN'T THOUGHT THAT FAR AHEAD.
REALLY?! IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T YOU HANG OUT WITH US SOME MORE?! HUH ?!
TOWN TO TOWN, SELLING BABO'S JUNK, LIKE THAT!
TRAVEL WITH YOU TWO ?
SURE !
UH, SO, WHATCHA THINK?

OH MY-- ISN'T THAT AN INTERESTING LITTLE OFFER!

NOW, WHO WAS IT WHO, NOT TOO LONG AGO, TIED ME UP AND TRIED TO RUN AWAY, I WONDER?

WELL, UH, ER..

WELL, WHAT THE HEY... IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, NO B-BIGGIE.

JUST THOUGHT IT'D BE MORE.. Y'KNOW... FUN WITH YOU ALONG. TWO GUYS, BO-RING.

OKAY!

HUH? WHAT? YOU MEAN IT?

YEP.

CROSS MY HEART AND HOPE TO DIE.

OH WOW! THAT'S GREAT! GREAT!

MAN, I'M GLAD I FINALLY GOT UP THE NERVE TO ASK!

ALL RIGHT! NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN, LET'S GET A MOVE ON! KYURAWEIL'S JUST A HOP AWAY!

WHAT A SLEEK LITTLE BEAUTY! PERFECT FOR THE LORD'S WORK.

HUH?

"AWAKEN TO THE GLORY AND TRUTH OF *MIANISM!* NEW CONVERTS WELCOME!".

?

WHAT THE HELL IS *THIS* ?!

PROSELYTIZATION TRACTS, SWEETHEART! FOR THE *CULT OF THE VIRGIN MIAN!*

LEMME SEE... "THE VIRGIN PROPHETESS MIAN, BLESSED BY THE HAND OF GOD, WILL LIBERATE *YOU* FROM EARTHLY CARES..." WHAT *IS* THIS CRAP ?!

DON'T YOU *EVER* GIVE UP?

SOME KIND OF NEW RIP-OFF ?!

OF COURSE, MY YOUNG NAÏF! RELIGION'S WHERE THE *REAL* MONEY'S AT! IT'S ALL THE RAGE!

LOOKS CLEAN TO THE FEDS; NICE, NON-TRACEABLE CASH DONATIONS; TAX-FREE...

SACRED RELICS! HOLY ICONS! MAKE 'EM CHEAP IN SOME OFF-WORLD BACKWATER, MARK 'EM UP 2000%!

AMEN! HALLELUJAH!

AND THE SUCKERS BUY LIKE IT'S GOING OUT OF STYLE!

JUST SOUNDS LIKE MORE *FRAUD,* TO ME.

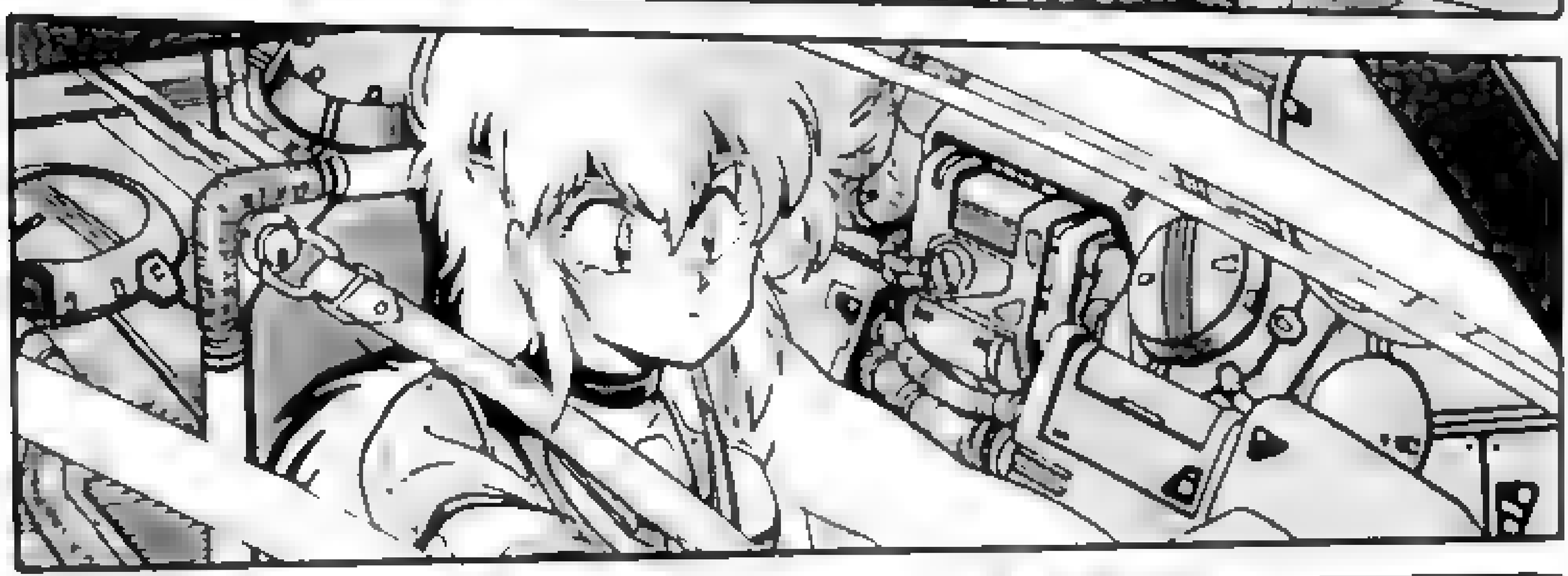
"FRAUD"...? "*FRAUD*"...? BUSINESS AND CRIME ARE JUST A CONTRACT APART, MY BOY

DIRTY MONEY SPENDS JUST AS EASY

WE'RE GOING TO THE *CAPITAL,* RIGHT ?! LOTS'A CHUMPS THERE, I'LL BETCHA! I PRINTED UP TEN THOUSAND OF 'EM

GO STUFF YOUR HEAD UP A PIG

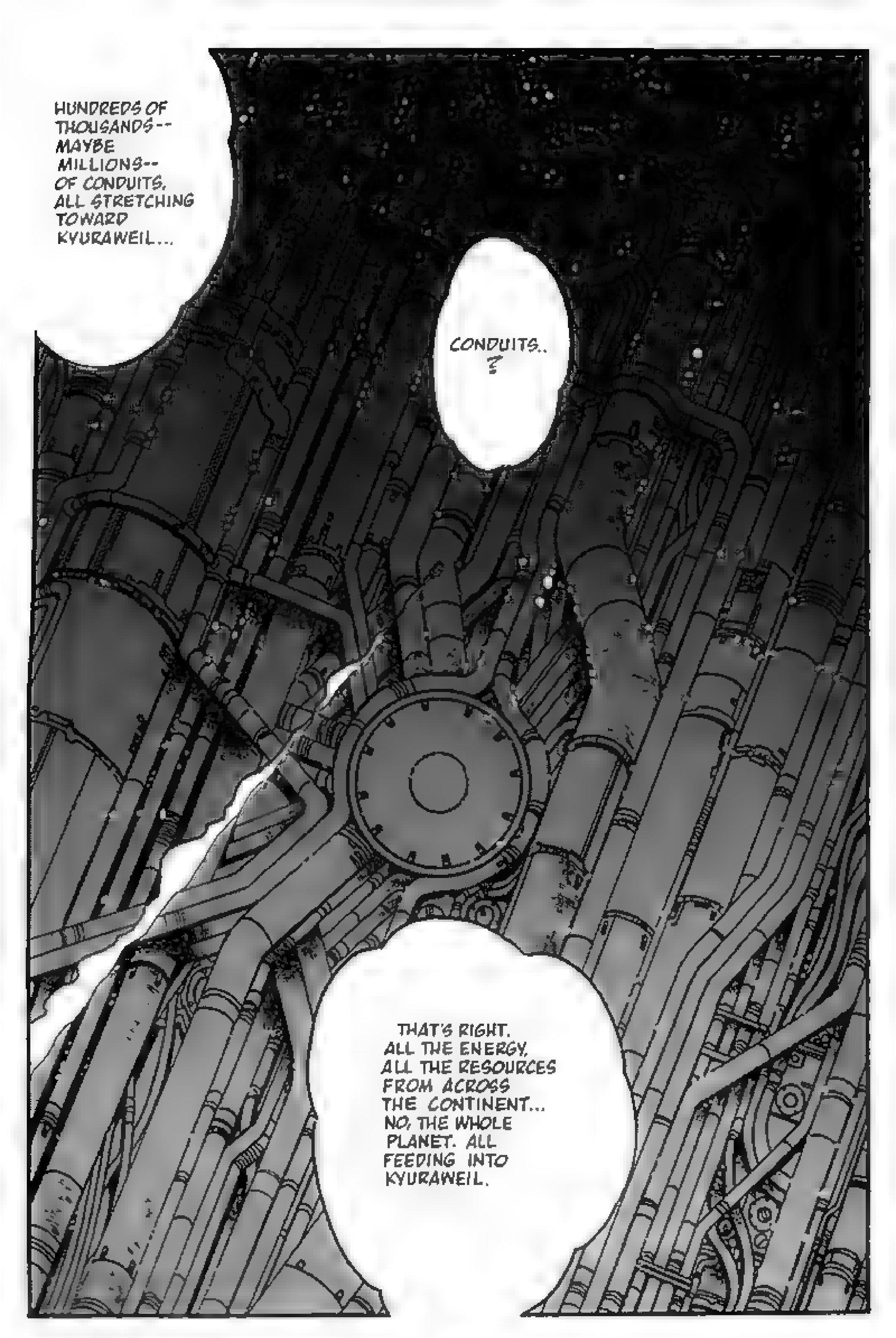
WHOOSHHH

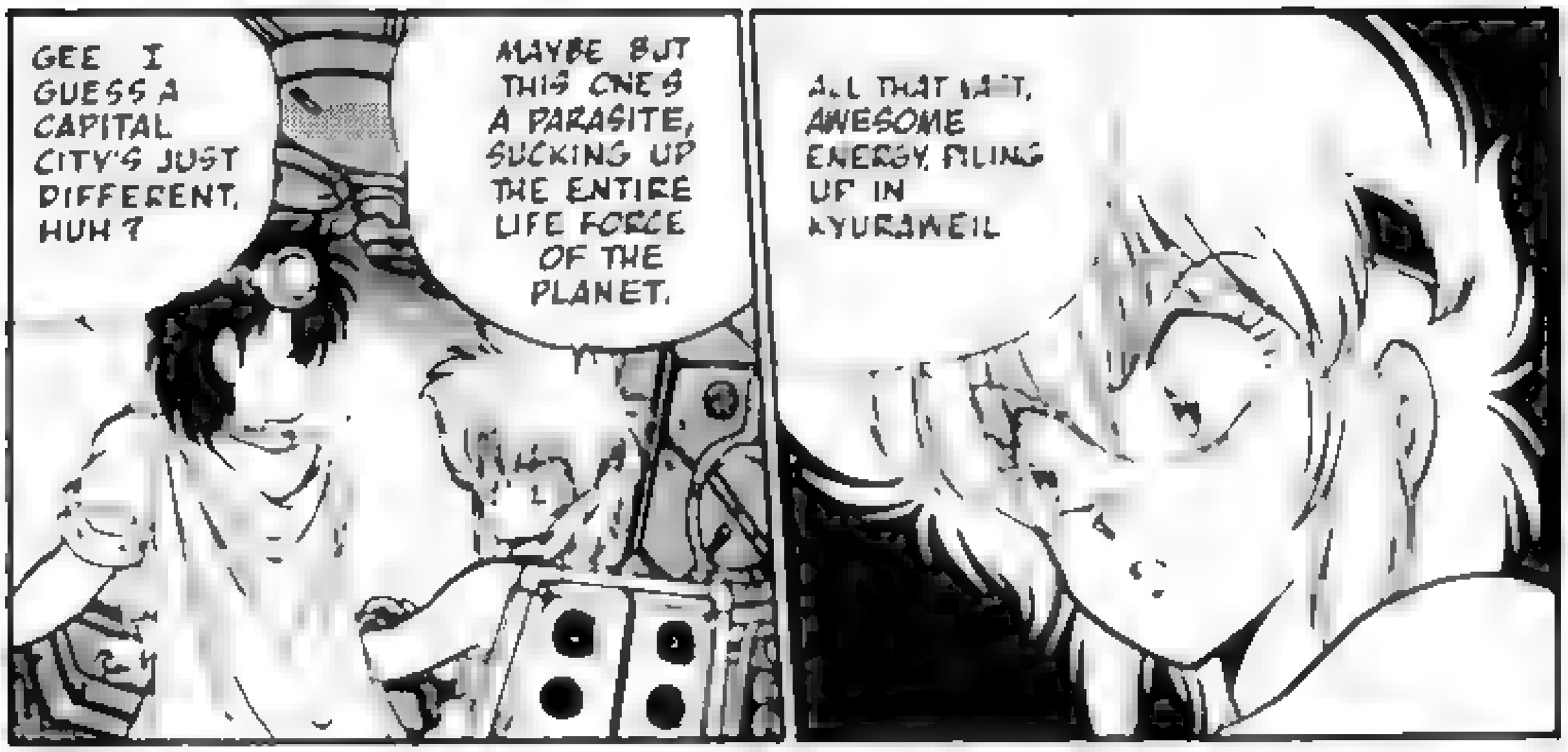


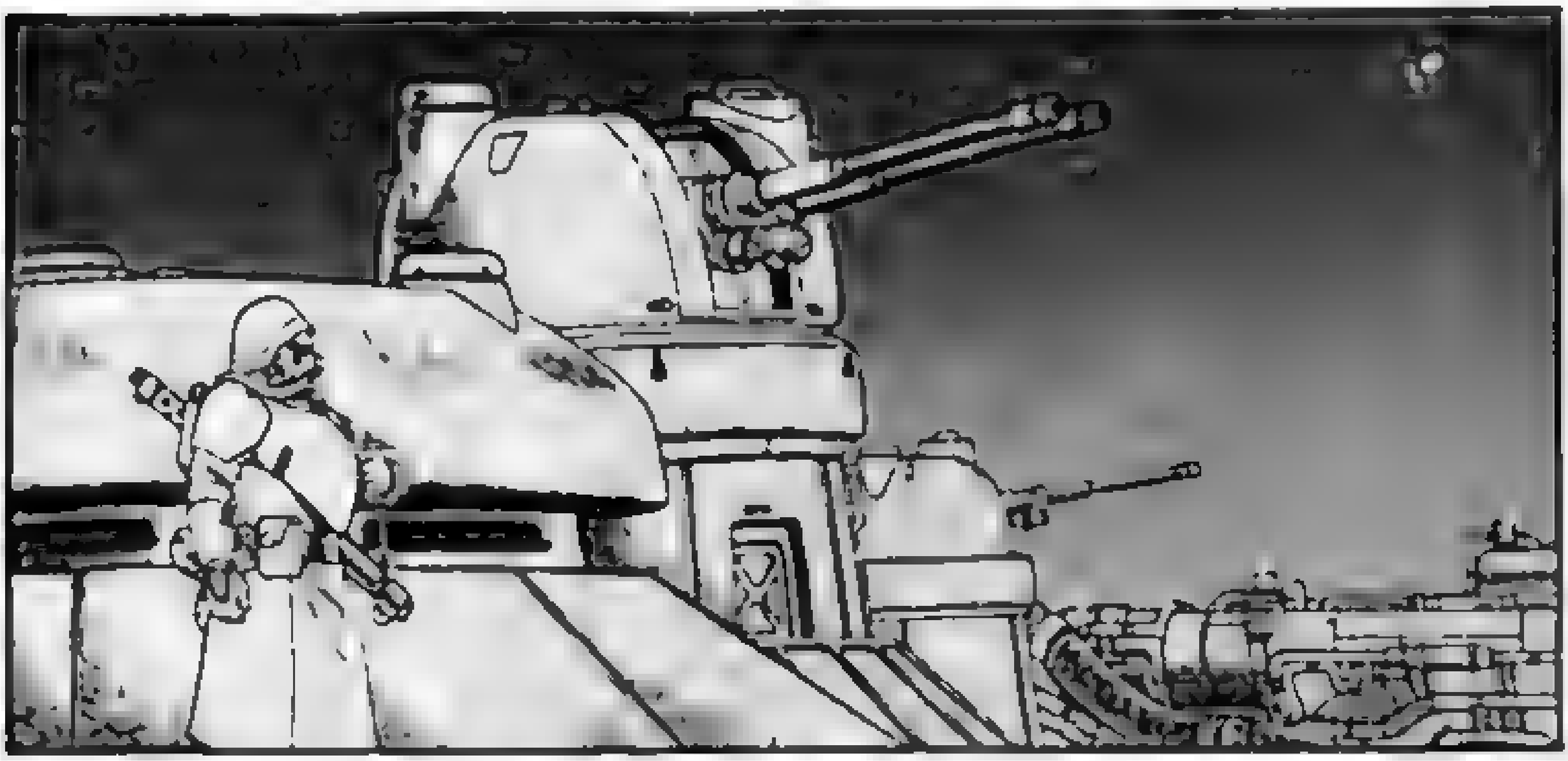
HERE YOU GO! MUG O'JAVA AND AN EGG SALAD SANDWICH!
CAN'T FIGHT THE EMPIRE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH!
UH, THANKS
YOU'RE IN A PRETTY GOOD MOOD, WATARU.
YOU THINK? GEE, MAYBE SO!
HEY, C'MON, BABO! CHOW DOWN! MADE IT MYSELF!
WHAT'S WITH YOU, LAUGHING BOY?

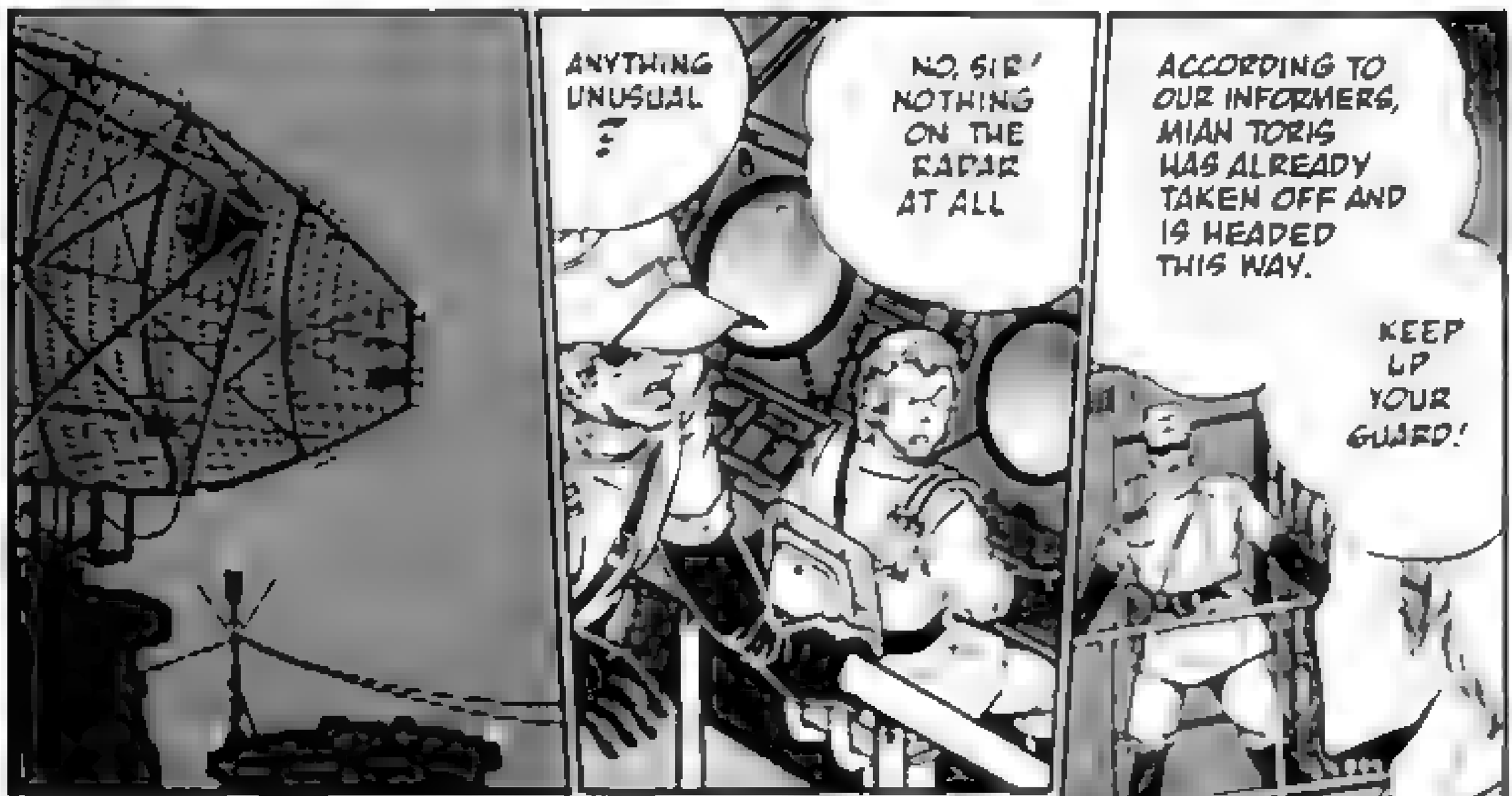
HOLY COW !

WHAT'S THAT ?!


HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS-- MAYBE MILLIONS-- OF CONDUITS, ALL STRETCHING TOWARD KYURAWEIL...
CONDUITS.. ?
THAT'S RIGHT. ALL THE ENERGY, ALL THE RESOURCES FROM ACROSS THE CONTINENT... NO, THE WHOLE PLANET. ALL FEEDING INTO KYURAWEIL.


GEE I GUESS A CAPITAL CITY'S JUST DIFFERENT, HUH ?
MAYBE BUT THIS ONE'S A PARASITE, SUCKING UP THE ENTIRE LIFE FORCE OF THE PLANET.
ALL THAT LAST, AWESOME ENERGY, PILING UP IN AYURAWEIL




ANYTHING UNUSUAL ?
NO, SIR! NOTHING ON THE RADAR AT ALL
ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMERS, MIAN TORIS HAS ALREADY TAKEN OFF AND IS HEADED THIS WAY.
KEEP UP YOUR GUARD!

WHSSHH!

!!

HEY! THAT'S A JET ENGINE!

COMING THIS WAY!

RADAR ROOM! DON'T YOU HAVE A CONTACT? WE CAN *HEAR* THE DAMN THING!

NO RESPONSE?! THAT'S *IMPOSSIBLE!*

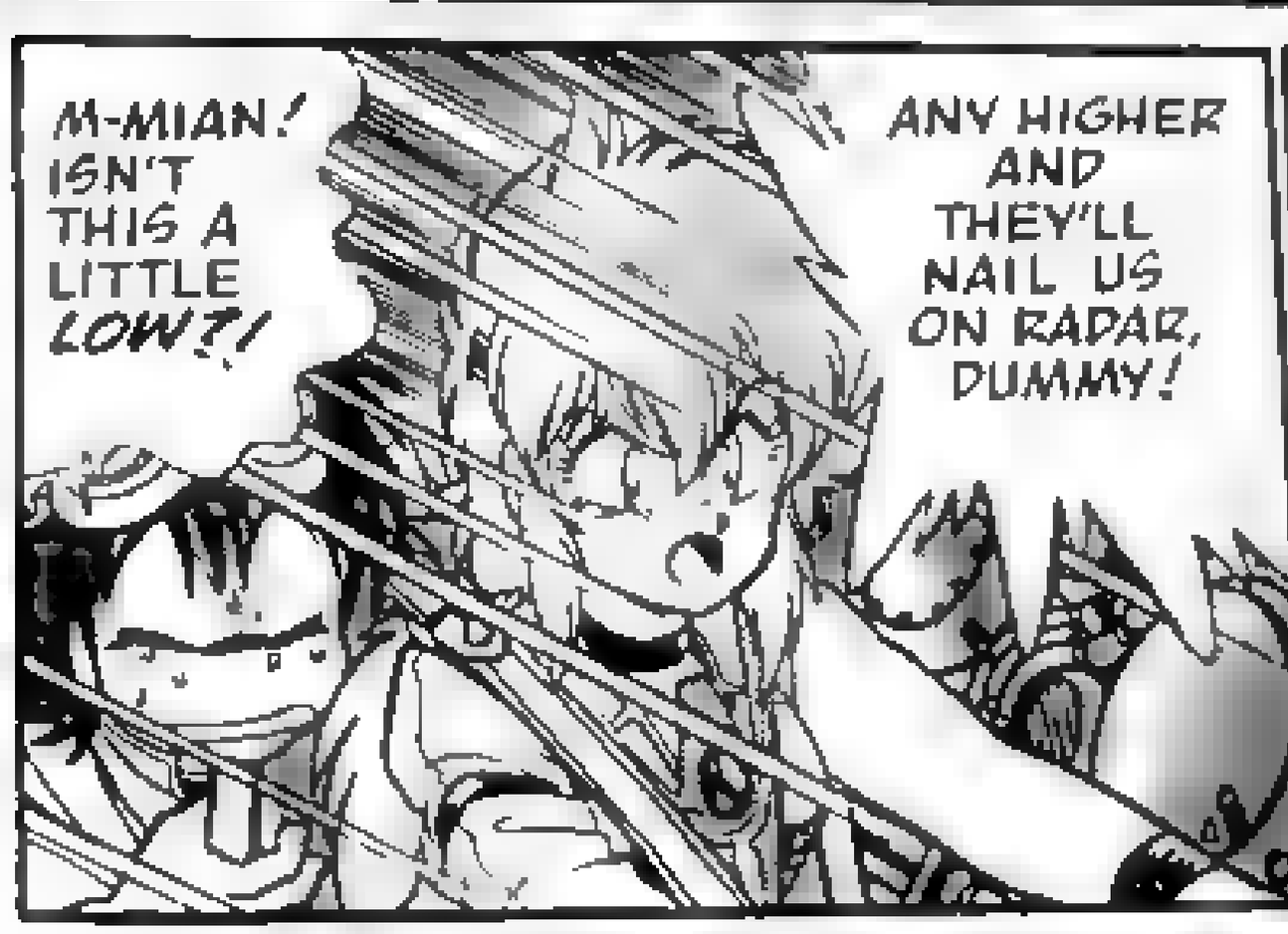
IT'S GETTING CLOSER! CAN'T YOU SEE ANYTHING?!

NOTHING! I DON'T GET IT!

WHOOSH!

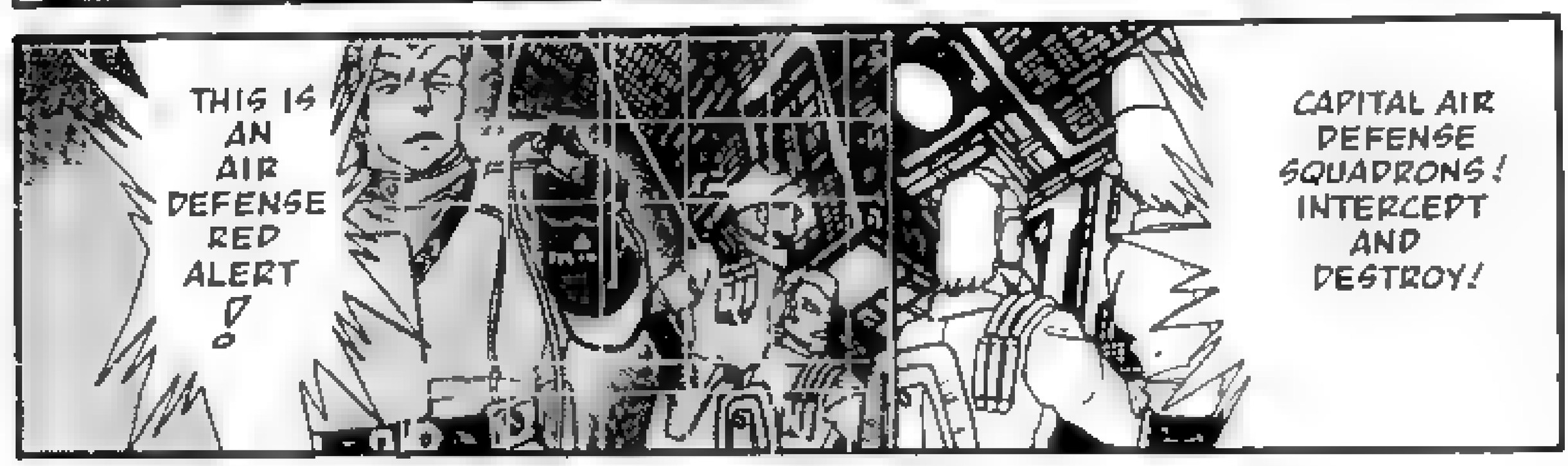
ALEE!

WHOOSH!


M-MIAN! ISN'T THIS A LITTLE LOW?!
ANY HIGHER AND THEY'LL NAIL US ON RADAR, DUMMY!

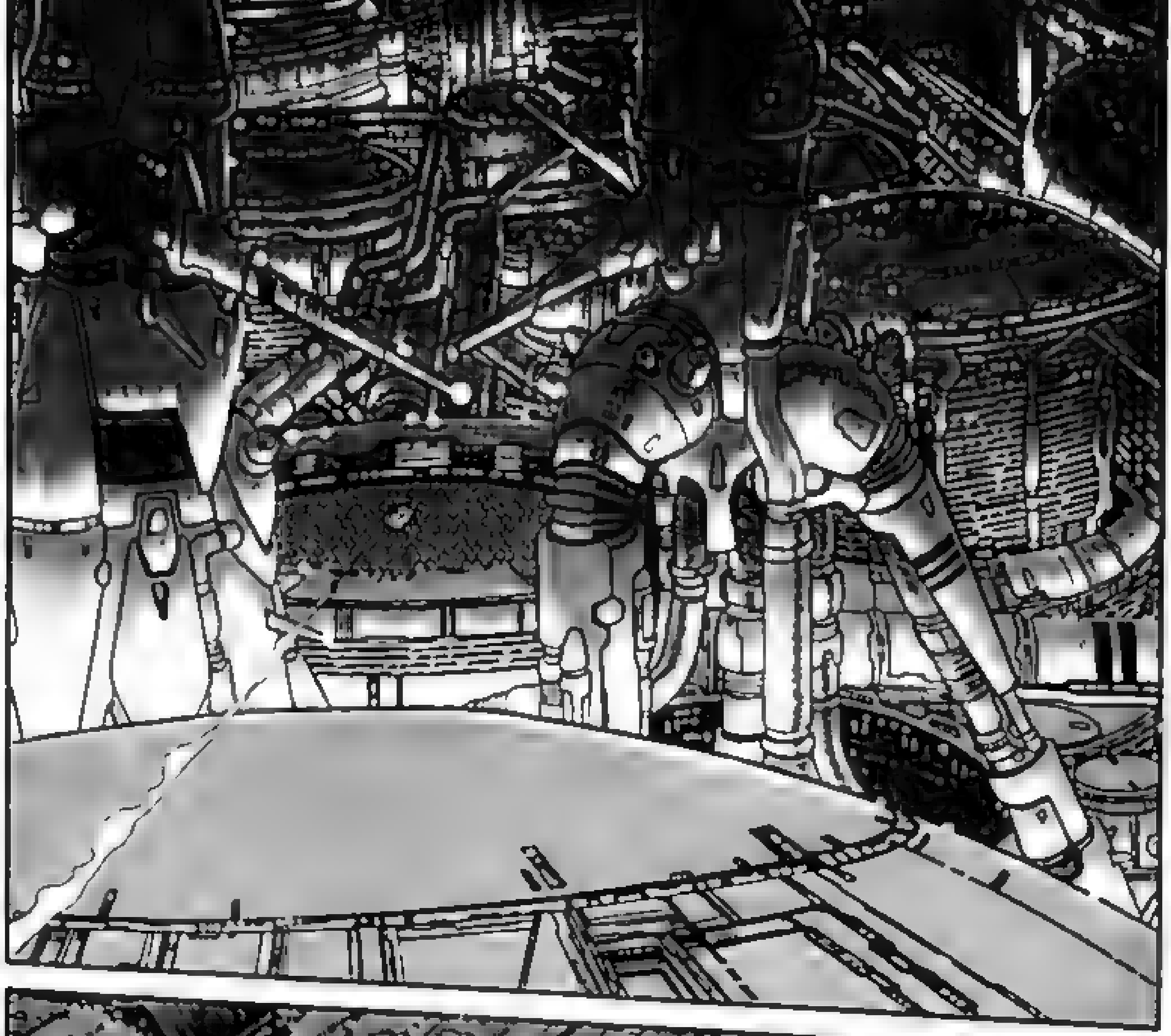
THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH!
CALL HQ! HURRY!

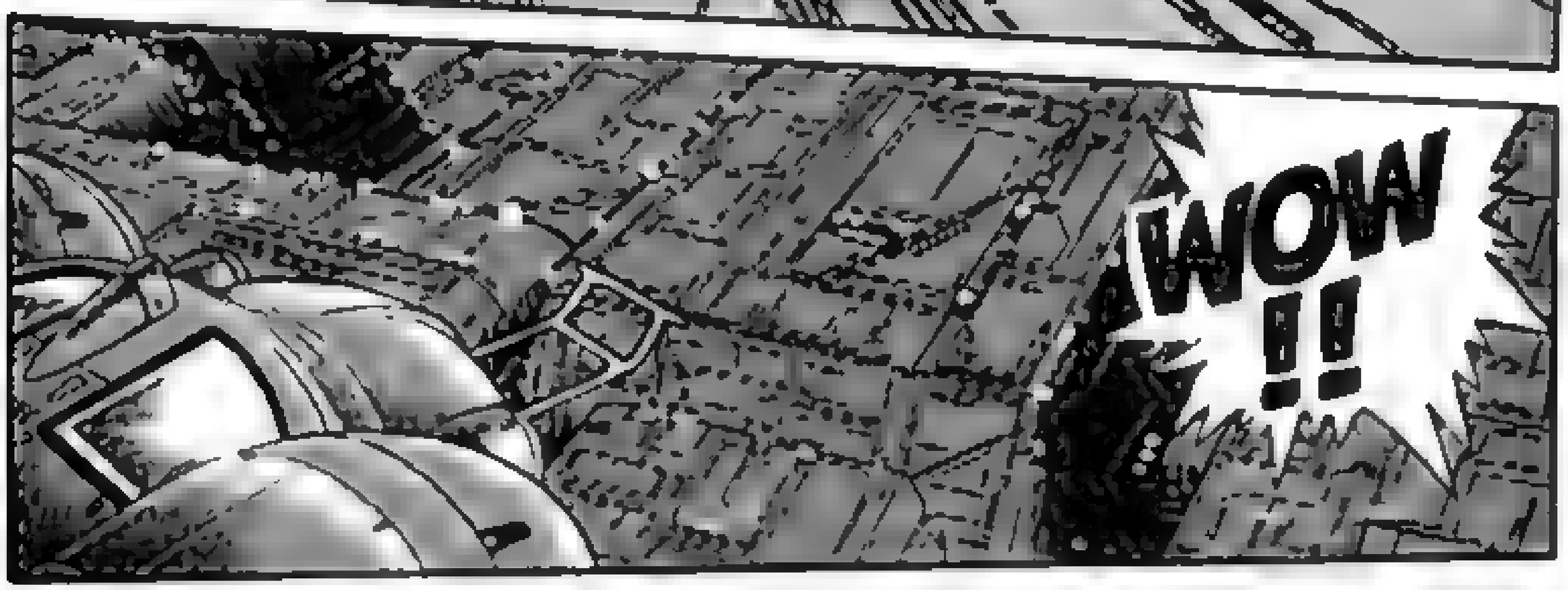
RED ALERT FROM FORWARD AIR DEFENSE POST FORTY-SEVEN!
AN UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT HAS BROKEN THROUGH OUR PICKET LINES! FLYING N.O.E.!
BOGEY NOW PENETRATING KYURAWEIL INNER AIRSPACE!


THIS IS AN AIR DEFENSE RED ALERT!
CAPITAL AIR DEFENSE SQUADRONS! INTERCEPT AND DESTROY!

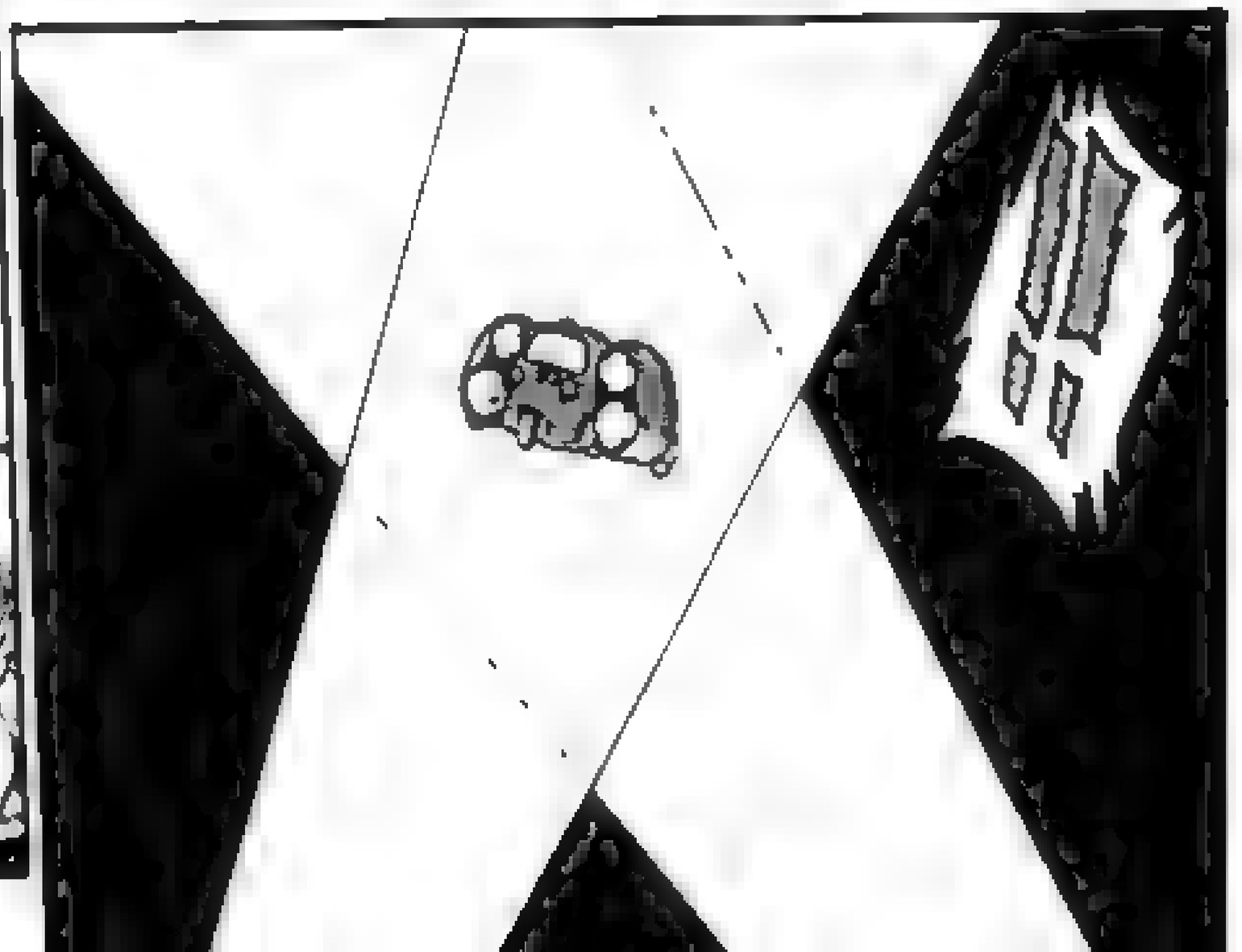
VREEFE

HEY--IT'S GETTING LIGHTER UP AHEAD!
THE LIGHTS OF KYURAWEIL, THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS!
KYURAWEIL!
ULP...
WHEN WE CLEAR THE NEXT RIDGE, WE'RE THERE!
BUCKLE UP!




WOW
!!

INCREDIBLE! I...I'VE NEVER SEEN A CITY LIKE IT.
THERE'S OUR MARKS, KIDDO IT'S SHOWTIME !!

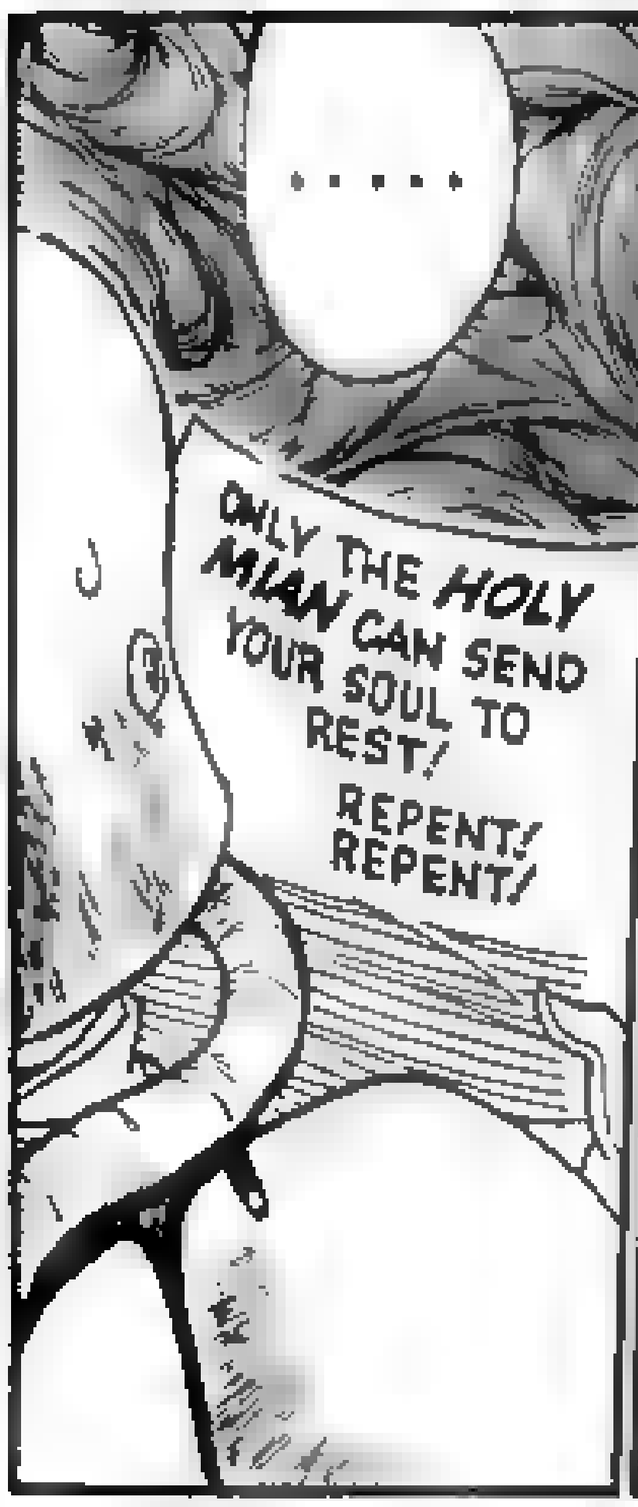


ALL RIGHT!! WE'RE IN THE SPOTLIGHT!!
TIME TO SPREAD THE GOOD WORD!

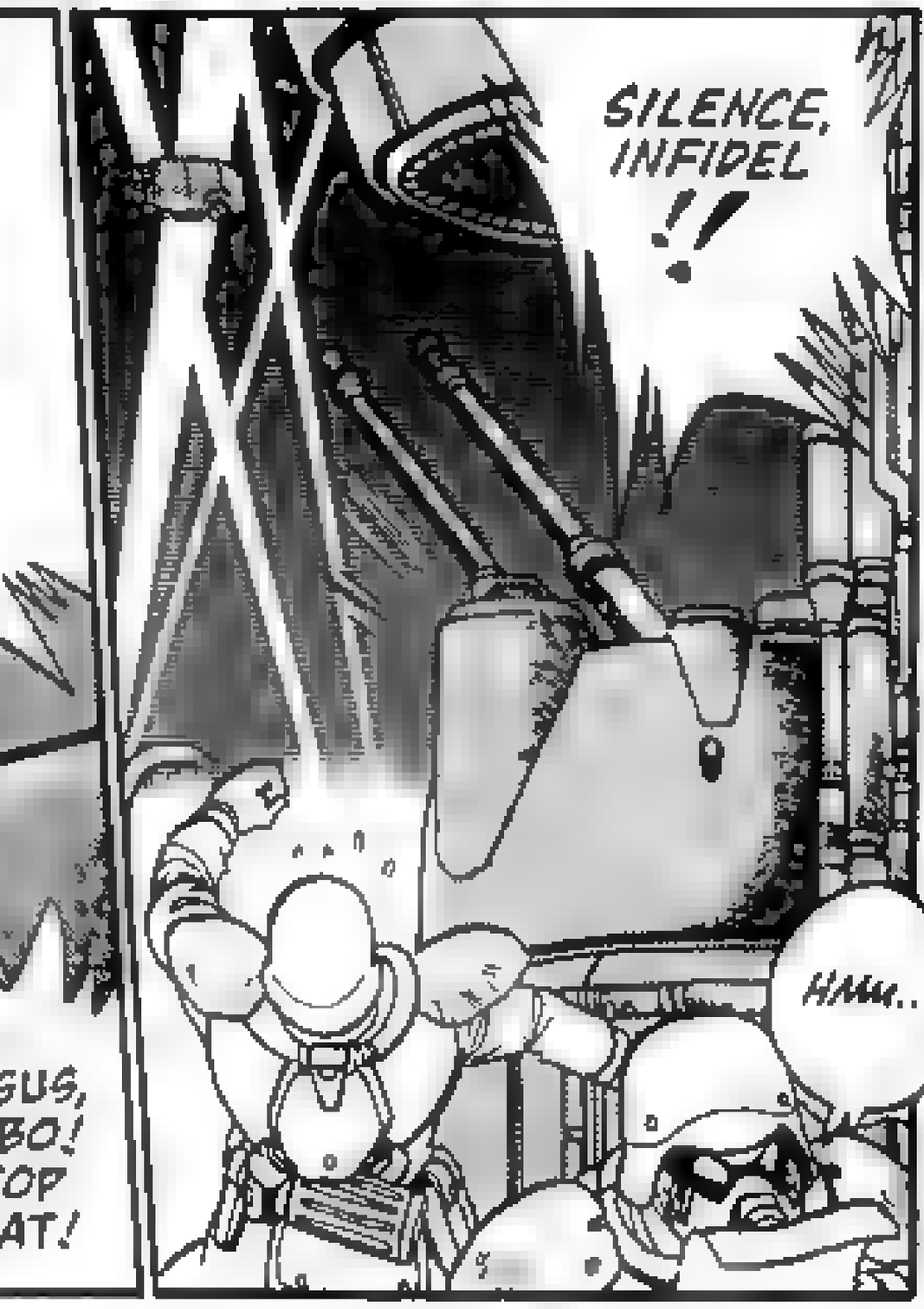
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT RACKET ?!

IT'S DROPPING SOMETHING !
HIT THE DIRT !!

HUH... ?


.....
ONLY THE HOLY MIAN CAN SEND YOUR SOUL TO REST! REPENT! REPENT!

OH, BELIEVERS! SALVATION IS NIGH!
THE VIRGIN MIAN SHALL GUIDE YOU UNTO THE LIGHT!! YEA, VERILY, YEA!!
JESUS, BABO! STOP THAT!


SILENCE, INFIDEL !!
HMM..

BUM
BUM
BUM
BUM
YAMEE!
YOW!
HEY! THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!!
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT, YOU TWERP?! NOW SHUT UP AND LET ME FLY!
BKAAA
BKAAA
BKAAA
BUMBUM

WHIKAAM

GYAAAH!!

FIRE!!

BABO! HELP ME PEE ON IT!

BAM BAM BAM BAM

USE THE FIRE EXTIN-GUISHERS, YOU BRICK-BRAINS!!

I DON'T GOTTA GO RIGHT NOW!

HEATHEN SWINE! DARE THOU SHOOT AT THE *HOLY VIRGIN MIAN*?! VENGEANCE IS MINE, SAYETH THE BABO!

WE'RE ALL GONNA *DIE!!*

NO WE'RE *NOT!!* NOW SIT *DOWN!!*

MOMMY !!!

I D-DON'T REALLY WANNA KNOW, BUT.
...IS THAT KYURAWEIL KEEP?!
IT SURE IS--THE CITADEL OF EMPRESS SHION.
NOW GET OUTTA MY WAY!

GOD DAMN, THAT'S THE BIGGEST THING I EVER SAW

GUESS YOU CAN BLOW A LOT OF DOUGH WHEN YOU'RE AN EMPRESS!

!!

DORA ONE TO BELTAR THREE! TELL THE FLAK GUNS TO HOLD THEIR FIRE!

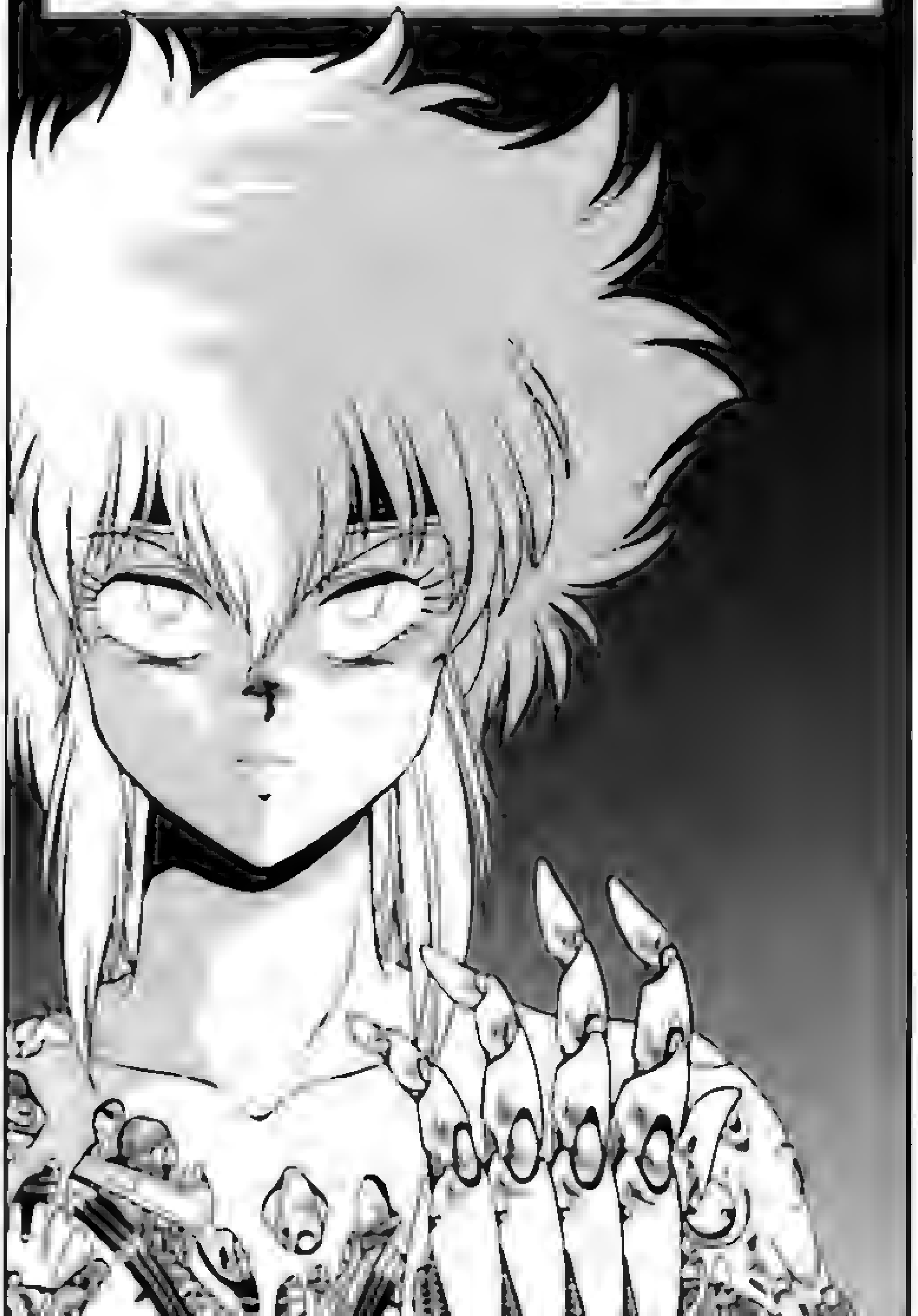
SHRIIIII

WE'RE GOING IN!!

HEY, WHAT TH-- ?!
ZIP IT! WE'RE GOING IN!
MIAN! CHECK SIX!
BRRR
EEEE
TTTT

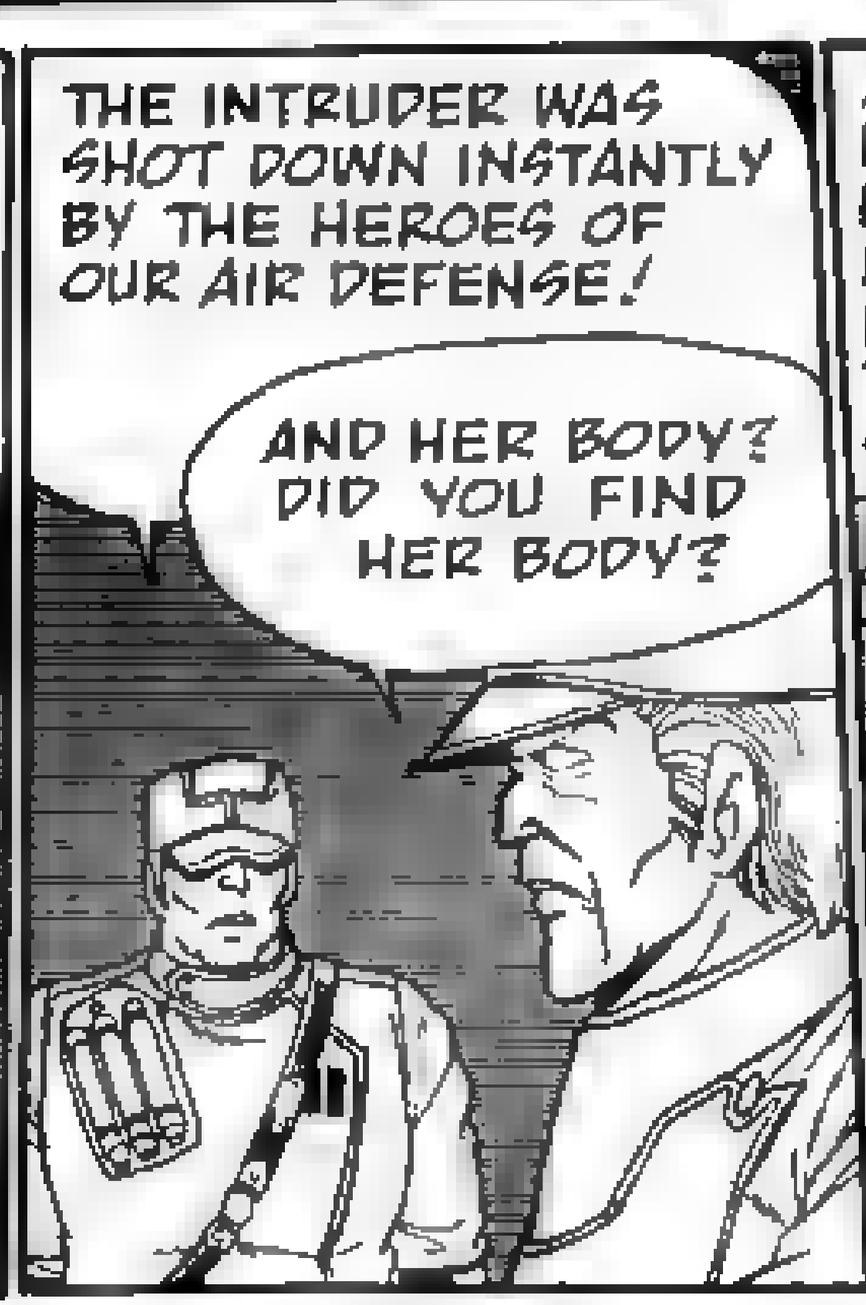
BOOM
VIRGIN MIAN, S-SAVE US!!
MIAN!! HELLLP, MIAN!!
BUDDA
DAMMIT DAMMIT DAMMIT!!
WELL, WELL, MIAN DEAR..
ALWAYS ONE FOR THE GRAND ENTRANCE, AREN'T WE...?

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES:
INTO THE GREAT LABYRINTH



ERICH von MANSTEIN! THE SUPREME MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF HELGEBARD FINDS YOU, THE ACCUSED, GUILTY OF HIGH TREASON AND CONDEMNS YOU TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT ON LEVEL FOUR!

IN CONSIDERATION OF THIS HEINOUS CRIME, YOU ARE DENIED PAROLE, PARDON, OR ANY REDUCTION IN THIS SENTENCE!



YOU UNDERESTIMATE HER YET AGAIN! THAT SINGLE GIRL CAN BRING DOWN OUR ENTIRE--

GENERAL, SIR!

FORGIVE MY IMPUDENCE, BUT YOU NO LONGER HAVE ANY AUTHORITY OVER OUR FORCES!

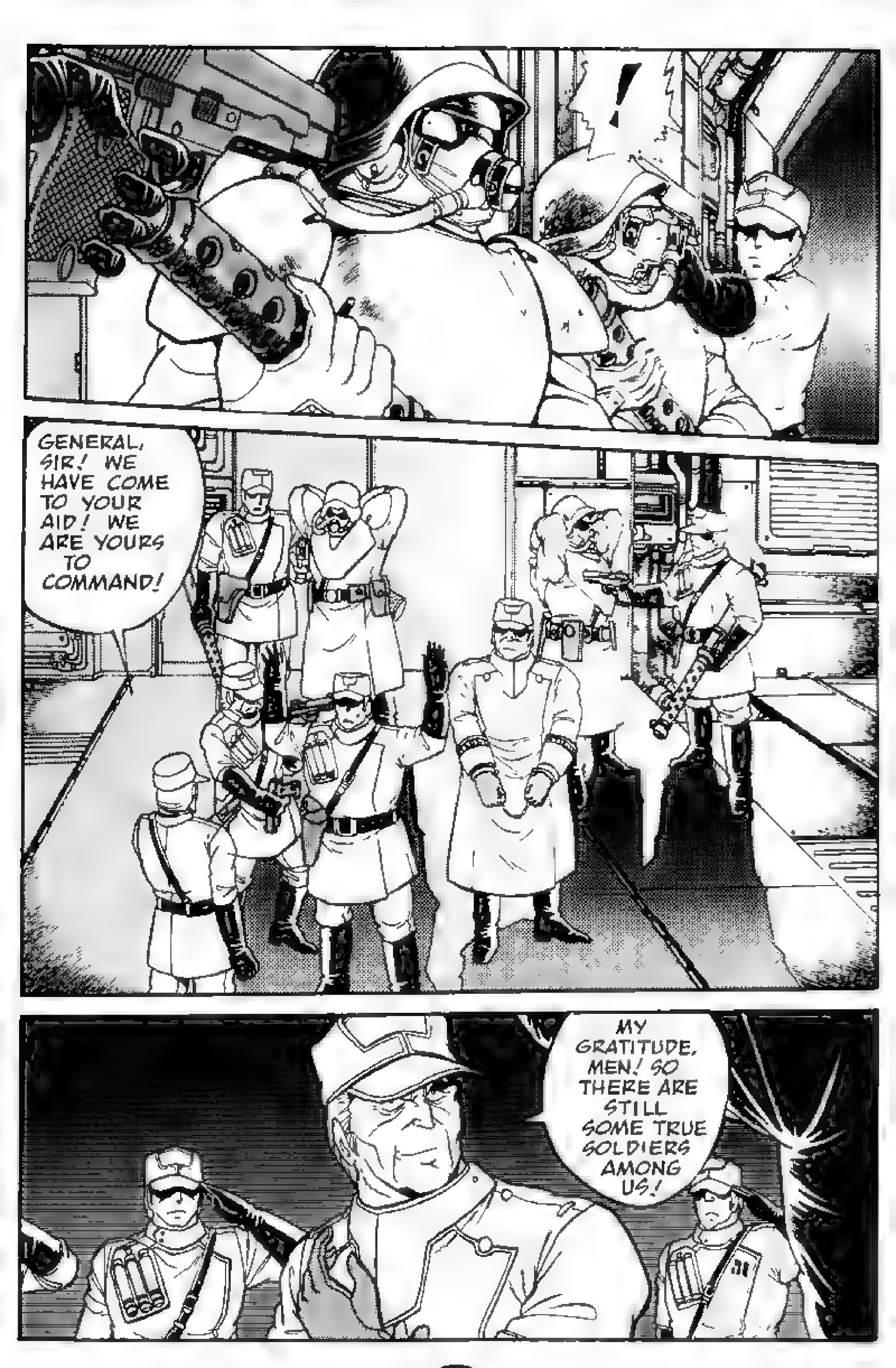
WE... THANK YOU FOR YOUR ADVICE.

HEH!

SO THAT'S IT, IS IT...?

TAKE US TO LEVEL FOUR!

LEVEL FOUR...ONCE THERE, I'LL NEVER RETURN, AT LEAST NOT AS A HUMAN BEING...


GENERAL, SIR! WE HAVE COME TO YOUR AID! WE ARE YOURS TO COMMAND!
MY GRATITUDE, MEN! SO THERE ARE STILL SOME TRUE SOLDIERS AMONG US!

I UNDERSTAND GENERAL MANSTEIN HAS BEEN ARRESTED.

YES, SO I HEARD. APPARENTLY HE TRIED TO TERMINATE MIAN TORIS WITHOUT IMPERIAL PERMISSION.

THEY SAY ALL THE OFFICERS WHO SUPPORTED HIM HAVE BEEN PURGED OR REPOSTED.

IT'S A CHECKMATE FOR GENERAL KESSELRING, THEN?

THOSE TWO HAVE BEEN BLOOD ENEMIES SINCE THE MILITARY ACADEMY.

ONE THE JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF, THE OTHER THE GENERAL WHO NEVER LOST A CAMPAIGN...

"WELL, AT LEAST THIS MEANS GENERAL KESSELRING IS FINALLY ON TOP, IN FACT AS WELL AS IN NAME."

"I GUESS WE CAN BREATHE EASIER OURSELVES..."

AN EMERGENCY, COLONEL? AND WHAT MIGHT IT BE? AN INFESTATION OF AKOGIS SELLING FAKE WATCHES?

NO, SIR

HEH..

GENERAL MANSTEIN HAS ESCAPED FROM HIS GUARDS IN TRANSIT! WE CAN'T FIND HIM!

CRASH!

WHAT!? WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

RENEGADE MANSTEIN SUPPORTERS HELPED HIS ESCAPE, SIR!

WE'VE ISSUED A FULL ALERT AND SEALED OFF THE CITADEL...

FIND HIM!!

I DON'T CARE WHAT IT TAKES! FIND HIM!!

AND WHEN YOU DO, SHOOT TO KILL!!

YOU'RE A TOUGH BASTARD, MANSTEIN...

VRNN VRNN

JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE HOLDING ON TO?!
HEY, LIKE I HAVE A CHOICE!

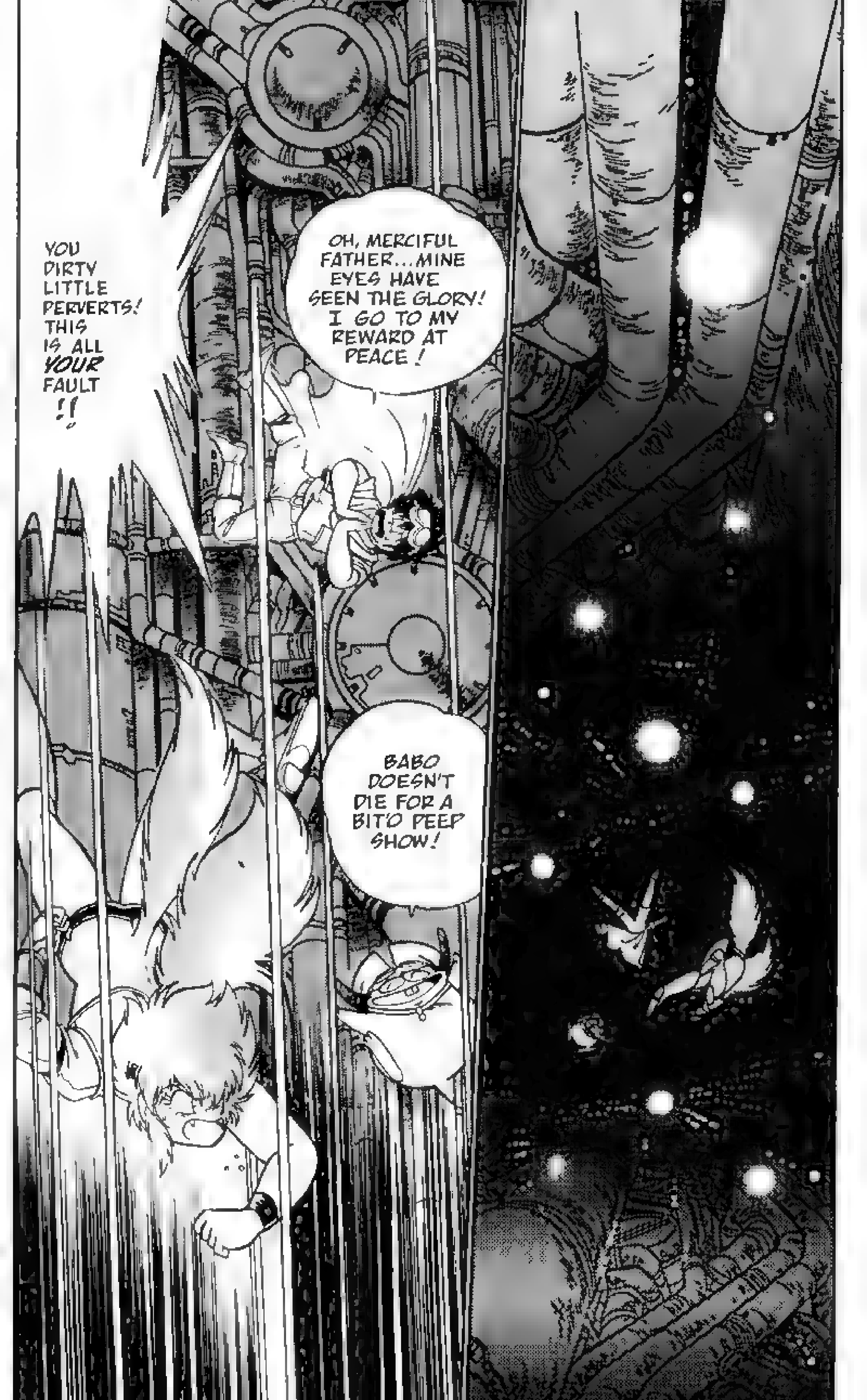
BESIDES, IT COULD BE WORSE-- I COULD DO THIS!
EEK!
RUB RUB

STOP IT, YOU FREAK!!
OOH, SO SMOOTH, SO SOFT, SO WARM!
BONK
BONK
BONK

WHOOA!
USB

S-STOP! STOP THAT! YOU IDIOT! YOU SLIMEBALL! YOU JERK!
STOP PULLING, YOU PERVERT!!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?!
STOP HOGGING THE FUN, WATARU! GIVE OLD BABO A PEEK!
JUST ANOTHER INCH OR TWO! GO FOR IT, LADDIE!

LET GO OF ME!!
PULL, WATARU, PULL!
OW OW OW!!
PLEASE STOP! I MEAN IT! IT'LL COME OFF!!
EEEEEK!!
OOPS
WHOOSH


YOU DIRTY LITTLE PERVERTS! THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT !!
OH, MERCIFUL FATHER...MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY! I GO TO MY REWARD AT PEACE!
BABO DOESN'T DIE FOR A BIT'O PEEP SHOW!

FSS
HUH?! WHAT ARE THESE WEIRD RUBBERY THINGS?
OW WIE...
EEEYUCK! AKOGIS!
OY!! USE OF AKOGIS AS LANDING MATS REQUIRES A CONTRACT AND SUBSTANTIAL DEPOSIT, SISTER!
WHO AM I.. WHERE AM I...?
HMM. LOOKS LIKE WE FELL A REALLY LONG WAY...

EH ?!
IT CAN'T BE! NOT YOU GUYS?!
HALLELUJAH! IT'S GOOD OL' BABO!
IF IT AIN'T OLD HANKERSON! AND TRUMP!
HAVE MULLANEY AND HORN MADE PAROLE YET?
KARABATSOS, MACKLIN, AND AOKI, YOU ROGUE, YOU!
JEEZ, BABO... YOU KNOW THESE GUYS?!
KNOW THEM?! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THIS IS THE WHOLE DROPOUT CLASS OF '72, AKOGI CENTRAL BUSINESS ACADEMY!
BY DAMN, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU!
NYAHAHA
SKÅÅL !!
WHAT IS THIS?! CLASS REUNION TIME ?!
NOW MY HEAD HURTS...
JUST HANG IN THERE, MIAN...
PSSST, BABO... DON'T TELL ME THAT'S MIAN TORIS, THE BIMBO THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGG...?

OH, MISS MIAN! MAKE US YOUR PETS, TOO !

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS !

NOW IS THAT A NICE THING TO SAY...?

BUT SINCE WHEN DID MERE WORDS HURT OUR THICK, WARTY HIDES, HUH ?!

FOR STARTERS, WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING IN KYURAWEIL KEEP ?!

WE GO WHERE THE WIND BLOWS, BABE!

THE WIND ?

MADAME, I SEE YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THE GREAT AKOGI MIGRATION !

WHEN YOU GET TOO MANY AKOGI IN ONE SPOT, ECONOMIC GRIDLOCK! NO ONE CAN MAKE ANY DOUGH!

BUT THE GENIUS OF MOTHER NATURE HAS FOUND A WAY! WHEN THAT HAPPENS, WE ALL CLIMB THE NEAREST TOWER...

"uff"

AND SPEW FORTH DELICATE, FRAGILE STRANDS OF, UH, SOMETHING FROM OUR BEHINDS!!

SPLUT-SPLUT

CAUGHT UPON THE SOARING WINDS, OUR SILKEN STRANDS WAFT US AROUND THE GLOBE, BRINGING THE BLESSING OF AKOGI BUSINESS ACUMEN TO ALL!!
(FROM: THE STUDIO PROTEUS GOLDEN BOOK OF AKOGI BIOLOGY, VOL. III)

TAKE CARE, GUYS!

NO!

INSPIRES AWE, NO?

AND THUS WE ALL WOUND UP HERE, IN KYURAWEIL KEEP, BUT...

...SEE FOR YOURSELF! WHAT A DUMP!

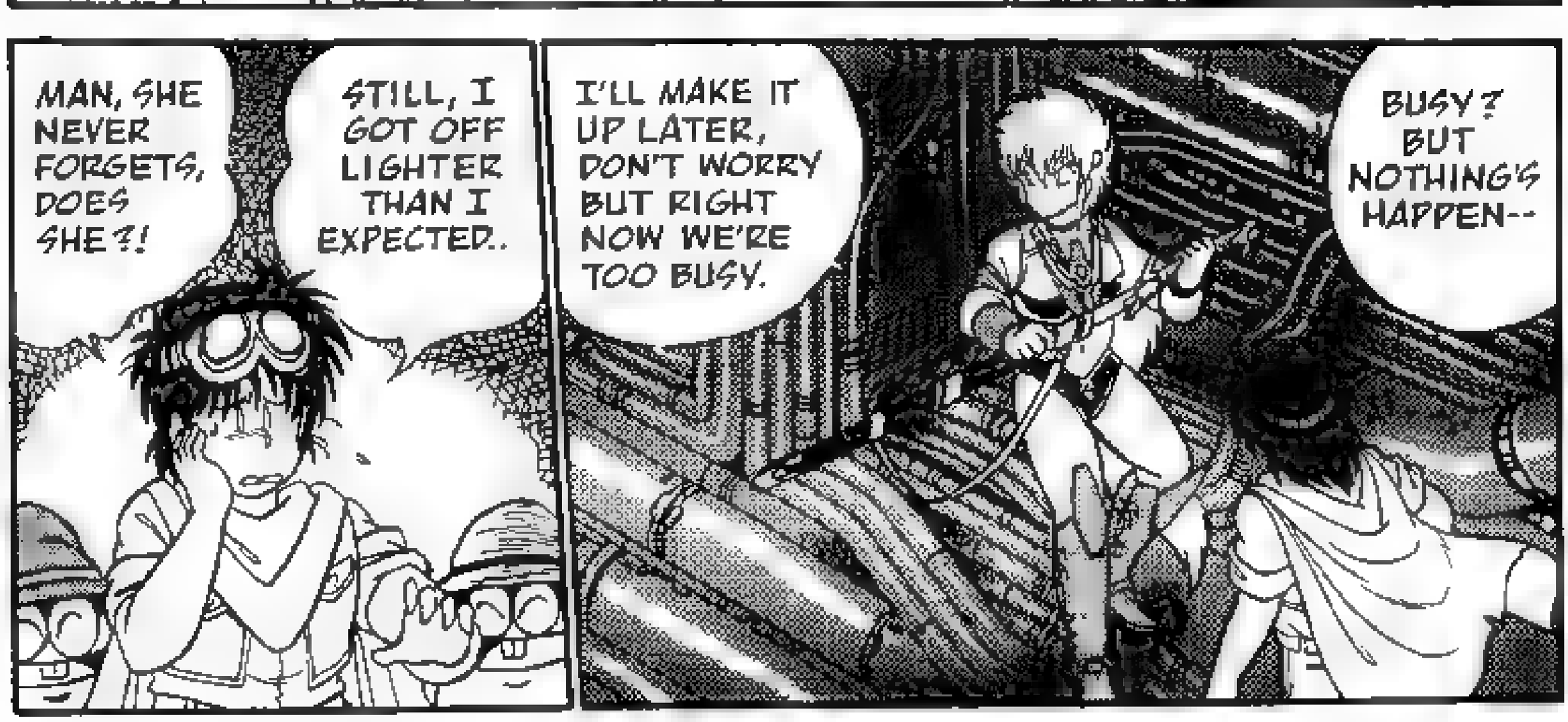
MACHINES, MACHINES, WHEREVER YOU GO! AND I THOUGHT THE CAPITAL WAS MEGA-PORK BARREL PARADISE!

WELL, WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? THIS IS A POWER PLANT, YOU BLOBS!

YOU GOT THAT RIGHT!

A POWER PLANT?
YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF, REMEMBER, WATARU? ALL THOSE PIPELINES FEEDING INTO THIS PLACE?
THIS IS A GIANT GENERATOR, CONVERTING ALL THOSE FOSSIL AND THERMAL RESOURCES INTO A DIFFERENT KIND OF ENERGY...
ZENKIN ZENKIN ZENKIN

SO LIKE, WHAT DO WE DO NOW ?
WE TRY TO FIND A WAY INTO THE KEEP ITSELF... OH YEAH, I FORGOT!
WATARU, DEAR...?
UH. OH...
AWW, GEE WHIZ, MIAN!
HERE, BOY-- ICE! 10 D.D.C!
THAT'S FOR YOUR DIRTY LITTLE MIND!


MAN, SHE NEVER FORGETS, DOES SHE?!
STILL, I GOT OFF LIGHTER THAN I EXPECTED..
I'LL MAKE IT UP LATER, DON'T WORRY BUT RIGHT NOW WE'RE TOO BUSY.
BUSY? BUT NOTHING'S HAPPEN--

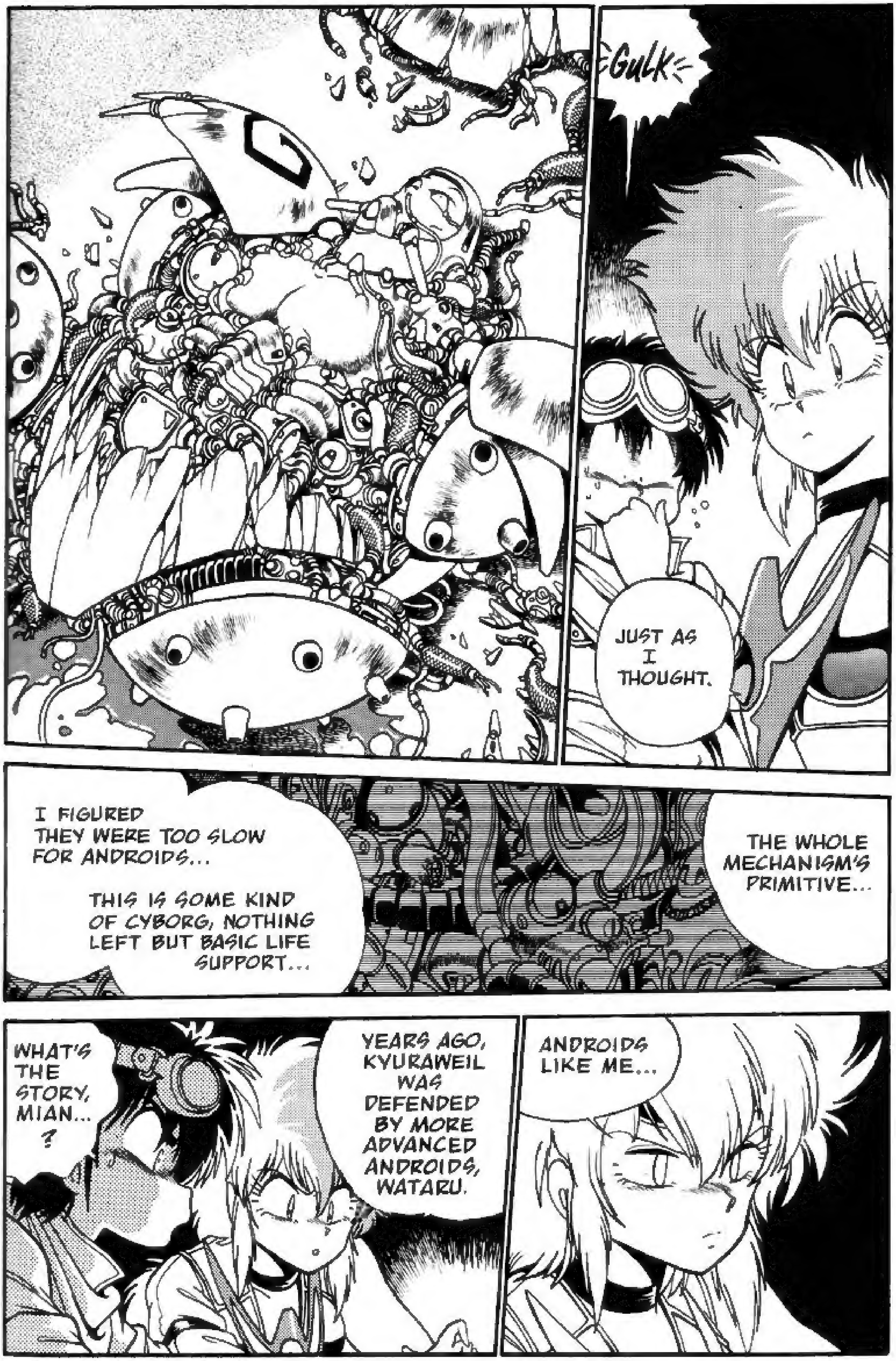
WH-WHAT ARE THOSE ?!
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? ANDROID GUARDS, PROBABLY
!!
YEO.U! THEY SPOTTED US!
WE'RE GOING THROUGH !!

NHSSHH
MAS
GRO
WHEA

LET'S HIT THAT ONE OUT EH?
SHE'S DOING IT FOR FREE NO FIGURE
HURRY UP! I'M GOING AWAY!
WAIT UP!

WATARU !

GROSS! ICK! YUCK!!
WELL, I'LL BE BOILED IN BEER. NO ACCOUNTIN' FOR TASTES!
MOVE, WATARU.
MIAN, LOOK--
AK


GULK
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
I FIGURED THEY WERE TOO SLOW FOR ANDROIDS...
THIS IS SOME KIND OF CYBORG, NOTHING LEFT BUT BASIC LIFE SUPPORT...
THE WHOLE MECHANISM'S PRIMITIVE...
WHAT'S THE STORY, MIAN...?
YEARS AGO, KYURAWEIL WAS DEFENDED BY MORE ADVANCED ANDROIDS, WATARU.
ANDROIDS LIKE ME...

IF SHION'S REALLY GONE AND TERMINATED ALL THE OTHER ANDROIDS UNDER THE CREATOR'S DIRECT CONTROL...

SHION, YOU CRAZY BROAD. YOU REALLY MEAN TO DO IT...

"CREATOR"...?

WHAT'S THIS "CREATOR" BUSINESS ?

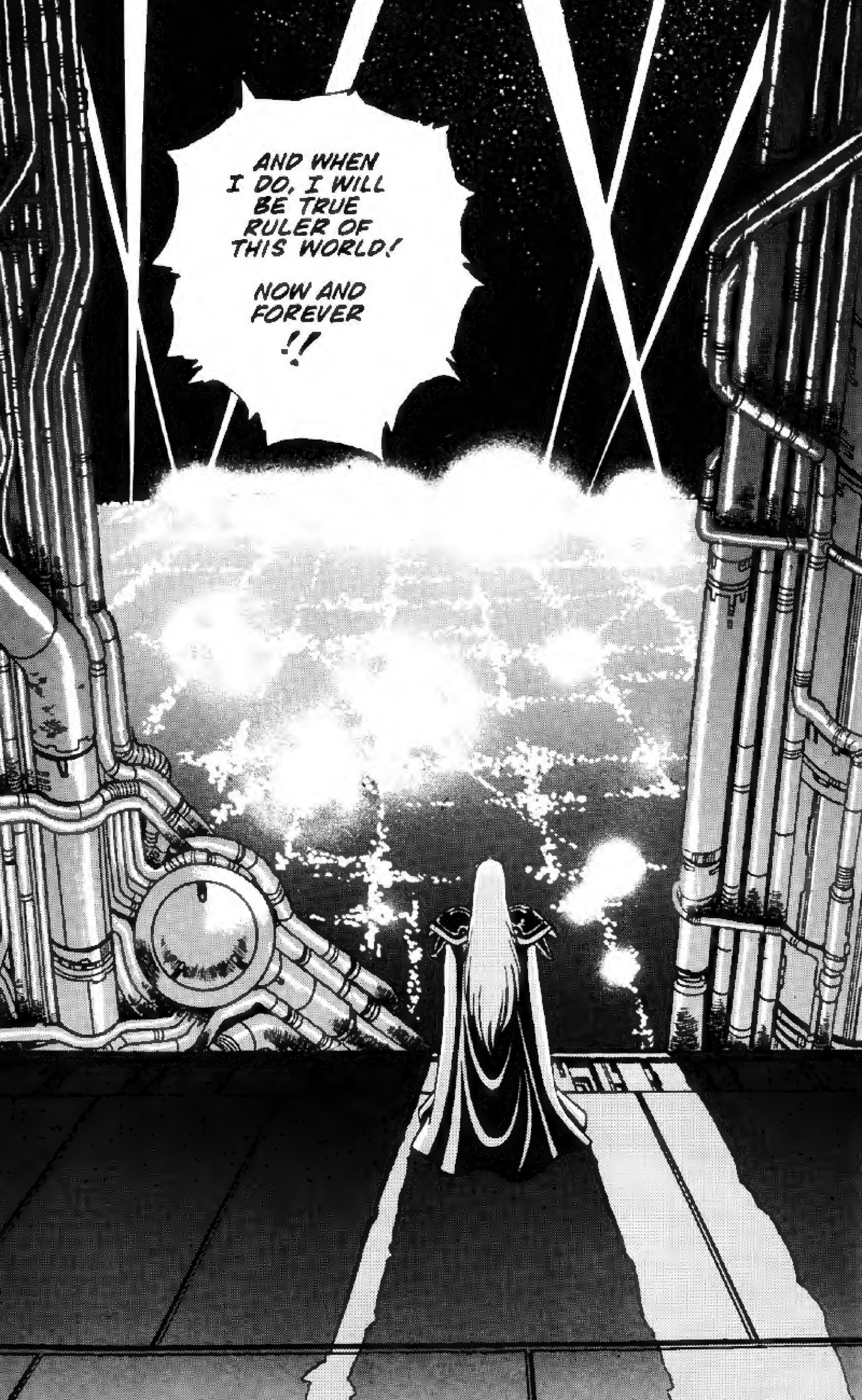
SURELY YOU CAN FIGURE IT OUT BY NOW ?

IF I'M AN ANDROID, THEN THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE WHO MADE ME.

THE GUY WHO MADE... MIAN ?

THAT'S THE CREATOR.

I WILL TRANSCEND YOU, CREATOR!
I WILL MAKE YOU KNEEL BEFORE ME!


AND WHEN I DO, I WILL BE TRUE RULER OF THIS WORLD!
NOW AND FOREVER !!